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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

THINGS AS THEY ARE;

OR,

TRINITARIANISM DEVELOPED.

SECOND PART.

IN REPLY TO

"A LETTER WRITTEN IN FEBRUARY, 1815, TO THE REV. JACOB NORTON, OF WEYMOUTH, AND NOW PUBLISHED WITH AN APPENDIX, CONTAINING SOME NOTES AND REMARKS, BY DANIEL THOMAS, A. M. PASTOR OF THE SECOND CHURCH IN ABINGTON;

TOGETHER WITH

A FEW INCIDENTAL REMARKS ON SEVERAL PASSAGES OF A SERMON PREACHED AT THE INSTALLATION OF THE REV. HOLLAND WEEKS, OVER THE FIRST CHURCH AND SOCIETY IN ABINGTON, ON THE NINTH OF AUGUST, 1815. BY NATHANIEL EMMONS, D.D. PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN FRANKLIN."

BY JACOB NORTON, A. M.
Pastor of the First Religious Society in Weymouth.

"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."

"But speaking the truth in love." . . . . . PAUL.

BOSTON:
Printed for the Author,
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1815.

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REV. SIR,

I HAVE lately received from you through the hands of the Rev. Mr. Perkins, a pamphlet entitled, " A letter written in February, 1815, to the Rev. Jacob Norton, of Weymouth, occasioned by a verbal communication that he had made to the Association of which he was a member, and now published, in consequence of his having issued a printed reply to it. Together with an appendix, containing some remarks. By Daniel Thomas, A. M. Pastor of the second church in Abington."

This pamphlet, Sir, I have attentively read, and I hope with a spirit of candor and impartiality. With the same spirit I shall endeavour to remark on the most prominent parts of it.

It is with painful emotions and almost insuperable reluctance, that I engage in this unpleasant business, from fear that I may utter any thing rashly, or which may not be strictly correct, or which may operate to your injury, or to the injury of our holy and beneficent religion.

To these evils controversial writers are not a little liable; and but too often are they justly chargeable with them. Carefully to guard against them has ever been my object, and I would hope, not without some good degree of success. Of this, however, the impartial and intelligent reader is the best judge.

Sensible of my own exposure to the errors which I think I discover in other controversial writers, I dare promise, neither myself nor my reader, that I shall not be guilty of the same; nor indeed can I indulge the hope, that the strictures which I am about to make on your letter, will, in all respects, be free from error. All that I can venture to engage and hope is, that in making them, no misrepresentation will designedly be made—that nothing will drop from my pen but what appears to me necessary, either directly, or more remotely, to the vindication of my own character, the support of truth, the correction of mistakes and errors, and the promotion of correct knowledge, and the cause of pure and undefiled christianity.—That the Fountain of all wisdom and truth may guide my mind and my pen to these desirable and important ends, is my heart's desire and sincere prayer.

In remarking on your letter, &c. I shall attend to the several parts according to their arrangement. The article

TO THE PUBLIC,

Claims my first attention.—This article states, that in the month of March last, I wrote to him (the Rev. Mr. Thomas) that I was preparing for the press an answer to a letter which he had previously sent me, which letter also, with his consent, I proposed to publish—that he informed me he should not consent to its publication—that after this, at a meeting of the association, I laid his letter and my answer before them—that I gave the association to understand, that although I might publish the substance of what I had written on the Trinity, yet that every thing of a *personal* nature should be suppressed—that since that period, however, my letter has appeared, notwithstanding my declaration to the contrary, in which I have dealt very liberally in personalities, and personalities too, that are highly reprehensible—and that I have published a number of extracts from the very letter, to the publication of which he had explicitly refused his assent.—To these statements, I have to reply, that they are correct in part, and, I am persuaded, in part only. That I expressed a wish, to the Rev. Mr. Thomas, to publish his manuscript letter, in connection with my answer to it,—and that he refused his consent, I readily acknowledge. And that I afterwards exhibited his letter to the Association, with his consent, and as I supposed by their desire, is also true; but that I made any engagement to them, or to Mr. Thomas, with respect either to *his* letter or *mine*, which I have in the least degree violated, I cannot, consistently with truth, admit.—To Mr. T. individually and personally, I have no recollection of having made any engagement, or even insinuation, with respect to the subject. All that I can recollect respecting the subject, is, that in consideration of certain circumstances, which in the proper place will be noticed, I intimated to the Association, Mr. T. being present, that I probably should not publish those parts of *my* letter, relating to "incorrect statements and exceptionable passages" in *his*, peculiarly of a personal nature.*—This intimation, I well recollect having made to the Association; nor with design, however I might have been understood, did I intimate more. And I can now say, my conscience bearing me witness to the truth of it, that, in publishing my letter, I strictly adhered to the spirit and design of whatever was implied in the intimation. As to the *highly reprehensible personalities*, with which my printed letter abounds, I have nothing more to say than

* See Appendix, No. 1.

that I am perfectly willing that every candid and intelligent reader should judge for himself in relation to the subject. With respect to the extracts from Mr. T's letter, to which he says, he *explicitly refused his assent*, I have nothing more to say than that I neither know, nor can make any satisfactory conjecture what he intends by it.

The article under consideration further states—that a supposition has been made that Mr. T. wrote to me as the organ of the Association, from a desire, as is believed, to exonerate me from the charge of disingenuousness, which would otherwise fasten upon me. This supposition he observes is unfounded.—In reply to it, I have only to say, that I knew not till I read this article, that the supposition above stated did exist—that I am desirous of no support which such a feeble prop might be supposed to give to my character in point of ingenuousness—that I cannot conceive, if it were well-founded, it could in the least degree vindicate my character from any charge of disingenuity, and that, for the reputation of my lately associated brethren, it is my hope that the supposition will gain no credit.

The article under consideration again states—" The man who has thus given publicity to such parts of the letter (Mr. T's.) as suited his purpose, was careful first to inform his readers that there were " several incorrect statements, and exceptionable passages" in it, which I, (Mr. T.) ' in a personal interview' with him, had explained and qualified. This declaration of his, (Mr. N's.) is calculated to make such impressions on the public mind respecting my (Mr. T's.) conduct, as are highly improper and injurious."—If Mr. T. in this quotation is to be understood as denying, or even insinuating that he *did not*, at the time alluded to, *explain* and *qualify* the passages in question, I much regret it, as I certainly understood him so to have done, and from a clear and constraining sense of duty. Believing as I did, that he really qualified and explained those passages according to the statement in my letter, and that he was under the most unquestionable obligation to do it, I felt no small satisfaction in discovering in him a disposition, as I then thought I did, to acknowledge his errors and mistakes. This I considered as highly honorary to him as a christian brother. Nor do I see that the statement which I made of this supposed fact, would in any degree be " improper and injurious." Indeed, I sincerely think that the statement, should Mr. T. admit it as correct, would be greatly in his favour.

In the concluding paragraph of this article, Mr. T. charges me with making an ungenerous attack upon his

character. Whether the charge is well founded will probably appear, to the satisfaction of the reader, in the course of the following pages. I have only to say at present, that if I have made such an attack, it was certainly without design, nor am I, in the least degree, conscious of having "done the deed."

In this connexion I beg leave briefly to state that the publication of my letter, of which Mr. T. complains as an ungenerous attack upon his character, so far as respects himself, resulted from the existence of several imperative circumstances.—That gentleman, with several other of my brethren, with whom I had been in the habit of ministerial intercourse by exchanges of professional labours, had for a considerable length of time denied me that intercourse without assigning any definite reason for the denial. My people, as might well be expected, made the inquiry, "Why is ministerial intercourse between our minister and these his brethren suspended?" To this inquiry I was able to give no definite answer. Conjectures were probably made, and surmises entertained to our mutual disadvantage.—Under these circumstances I received assurance from my brother Thomas, in a letter, which he addressed to me in the month of February last, that "it was *solely* on account of the ground I had taken with relation to Christ, and to the Holy Spirit, that he had been constrained to suspend exchanges with me."—I now for the *first time* considered myself authorized to state what was the ground of that suspension.—And as the suspension was a matter of *notoriety*, it appeared to me but right to make the ground of it *equally notorious*. This I have done, and as I conceive, in a fair and unexceptionable manner. But if Mr. T. thinks that I have done wrong in making this exposure in the manner I have done it, why, but to *retaliate*, has he published, and *without requesting my consent*, his letter of Feb. 3, and especially those parts of it, which are of a *personal nature*, in his *own sense* of the terms? If in publishing a *few things* which Mr. T. considers personal, I have "ungenerously attacked his character," what has he to offer in vindication of his own conduct, in publishing *many things* of that description, and unaccompanied too with any light by which his readers could decide as to their correctness!

This letter, no part of which Mr. T. will allow he had explained or qualified, as I understood him *honorably* to have done, I here place before the reader, with the substance of the remarks which I had made, on the incorrect and exceptionable passages it contains, and which I declined to publish, as has already been noticed.

LETTER.

Abington, Feb. 3, 1815.

Rev. Sir,

MY writing to you at this time, is occasioned by the communication which you made to the Association, at their last meeting. I have doubted the expediency of writing to you on the subject; but my doubts being in a measure removed, I have at length concluded to say something concerning several things contained in that communication. How my thoughts upon the subject will be received, I know not; but I hope, that neither their nature, nor the manner of expressing them, will be such as to give any just occasion for censure or complaint. Should I fail in this, I shall miss my aim, which certainly is not to increase those very difficulties subsisting between us, that have been, and still are to me, a source of inexpressible grief, and which I ardently desire may be speedily settled.

When, Sir, I heard you state your leading sentiments in divinity; declare that you had believed them nearly forty years; and signify that you had, since becoming a preacher, uniformly inculcated them from the pulpit, I was constrained to ask myself such questions as the following: If in his youth, if at the time of his studying divinity, and at the time of his ordination, Mr. Norton did believe the doctrines of total depravity, divine decrees, eternal personal election, regeneration by special divine influence, the perseverance of the saints, and the like, why have I been so often informed, that, at those periods, the impression among the people in the place of his nativity, and among his acquaintance, was, that he did *not* believe all these doctrines, that he was not fully in sentiment with the Rev. Mr. Niles, that he was not an Hopkinsian? Have I been misinformed on this subject? If not, were his most intimate acquaintance deceived respecting his religious tenets in those days? Further, if Mr. Norton does *now* preach the doctrines above-mentioned, which I know he *did* preach in a very distinguished manner, when I first became acquainted with him, and for the preaching of which, I know also that he was violently opposed by many, whence comes it to pass, that persons who *then* thus strongly opposed him, appear *now* to be well satisfied with him as a preacher? Surely, thought I, either *he* must have altered his strain of preaching, or a great and happy change must have taken place in *their* views and feelings: If the *former*, it contradicts *his* assertion; if the *latter*, why do *they* appear as much opposed as ever to the doctrines, and say, as some of them do, 'Mr. Norton does not preach such hard things as formerly, but softens down, and is now pretty correct?' And, admitting the correctness of that part of the communication to which I am attending, why is it, that some serious people, who, six years ago, were delighted with your discourses, are now grieved to find, as they think they do, that your strain of preaching and conversation, *aside* from the subject of Christ, is different from what it once was, tending to create in their minds strong suspicions, that you are gradually departing from that great system of truth, of which they had viewed you a strenuous and able defender? To me, I confess, there is in these things something dark and mysterious,

and which I should gladly see cleared up. In this, it is presumed I am not alone.

After saying some things with respect to your views of Christ, you charge the Association with having considered you an heretick, and rejected you. I well remember the discussion to which you refer, and on which you ground the correctness of your charge. It took place at the Rev. Mr. Richardson's, in April last. I think not more than *three* of the Association said things in that discussion, from which it could be inferred, that they considered him an heretick, who denies the Supreme Deity of Christ. Three members were not a majority. Admitting, therefore, that those *three* considered you an heretic, there was no evidence at the time, that the Association as a *body* did. But, Sir, if those three then said things which implied that they viewed *arianism* an heresy, so also did *you* say that which implied that you viewed *trinitarianism* an heresy. For I well remember that you then made a remark to this effect; 'If there be any such thing as heresy, trinitarianism approaches the nearest to it, perhaps, of any thing that can be named.' I pretend not to quote your words exactly, but feel confident that I have given the sense, as the remark made a strong impression on my mind. If, therefore, the three persons above-mentioned, considered you an heretick, and rejected you; I should say that you also considered *them* as hereticks, and *rejected them*, if you believe that there is any such thing in existence *as* heresy. Hence, if they at that time rejected you *without admonition*, as you seem to think, you then did the same with respect to them. It follows, therefore, that the censure, which in your communication, you pass on them, falls also on yourself.

You informed us, that some of the members had refused to exchange with you, and when requested to give you their reasons in writing, had refused to do it. Here, I suppose, you had exclusive reference to Dr. Strong and myself. In November, 1813, when the Association was at your house, he and I did inform you, that, under existing circumstances, we felt that we could not consistently exchange with you at present. You requested us to give you our reasons in writing. *This* we refused. But we did *not* refuse to give them verbally. This circumstance ought not to have been omitted in your communication. While a part of the truth respecting the matter was told, a part of it was suppressed; which was calculated to make a wrong impression on the minds of those unacquainted with the subject.

In your communication, I thought you clearly discovered a disposition to censure people in many places, because they would not read your books; and at the same time complained, that in such places, your sentiments respecting Christ were grossly misrepresented, that you was considered as maintaining that he is no more than a mere man. Whether people are criminal for refusing to read your books, is a question which I deem quite unnecessary at present to discuss. Whether you suppose that some members of *this Association* have misrepresented your sentiments to their people, who will not read your writings, I know not. But certainly, your introducing the subject in the manner you did, gives

me reason to suspect that you suppose so, and that you intended, in a covert way, to censure such members. For otherwise, I cannot see why the subject was mentioned at all, in a communication made professedly and particularly to the Association. I shall not attempt to answer for others; but for myself, I can assure you, that I have not misrepresented your sentiments, either to my own people, or to any others. I have often been asked in this and various other places, what your sentiments are concerning Christ; and have never, in my answers, once intimated that you consider him no more than a mere man; but have uniformly represented you as believing that he is what you make him in your writings. Nor do I believe, that there is a single person in my parish, or in this town, who considers you a Socinian, who considers you, what I have often heard you pronounce Trinitarians to be. I know it would be ungenerous and unfair, to say the least, were *I* to call *you* a *Socinian*. It is no *less* ungenerous and unfair, for *you* to call *Trinitarians* so. I think, Sir, that you, who believe that Christ, in his highest character, is inferior to the Deity, ought to be the last man to complain for being charged with Socinianism, since you so often charge it upon those who hold, that Christ, in his highest character, is the supreme Jehovah.

In your communication, after expressing your surprize, that in my discourse at Dr. Strong's funeral, I pronounced him a Trinitarian, you informed us, that my assertion 'must have been made through ignorance, or else it was a wilful misrepresentation.' You then told us, among other things, that *you* 'knew the deceased was *not* a Trinitarian.' Permit me, Sir, in my turn, to express *my* surprize at this assertion of yours. For I venture to affirm, that *all* the members of the Association, except yourself, will not hesitate to say, that they firmly believe Dr. Strong *was* a Trinitarian; and that they believe this from his own express and positive declarations, which they themselves have heard him make repeatedly, time after time, for years, and especially during the last year of his life. Indeed, if you can bring *one* witness, as you say you can, to prove your assertion, I can bring *hundreds* to prove mine. I can bring, not only the Association of which the deceased was a member, but the Society of which he was minister, and multitudes of his intimate acquaintance in other places. I am, Sir, the more astonished at your assertion, that you knew the deceased was not a Trinitarian, because I have so often heard him, in your presence, solemnly declare his firm belief in the doctrine of the Trinity; and this he sometimes evidently did, because you seemed to doubt whether he believed it. But he is gone. He can no longer speak for himself; and now you say, you knew he was *not* a Trinitarian; and because I affirmed that he *was*, you tax me with ignorance, or wilful misrepresentation! Doubtless I am ignorant, but not of Dr. Strong's sentiments on this subject; and had I represented them as you do, I should then have been *really* guilty of *wilful misrepresentation*, and should have injured both the dead and the living. On this ground you might in justice have charged me as you did. But as it is, I must plainly tell you, that I view that charge as cruel. This,

Sir, is not the way to repair breaches. This is not the way to heal wounds. This is not the way to promote harmony, peace and love. I think I feel willing to be admonished for my faults. But it seems hard to be censured for honestly stating, at a proper time, an important fact, of which there is the most plenary evidence.

With respect to the admonitory part of your communication, I shall add but little to what I have already said. Your meeting with the Association, and occasionally exchanging with a majority of the members, proves that they have not rejected you as an heretick. Hence your complaint, that they *have* rejected you *without admonition*, is unfounded.

With respect to myself, I verily believe that those who deny the supreme Deity of Jesus Christ, however exalted a being they may suppose him to be, are in a great and dangerous error. You know, Sir, that you have denied that he is God, in the highest sense of that word: and have strenuously defended, both by conversation, and writing, and preaching, a scheme which is substantially *arian*. And believing, as I do, that on this subject, you have imbibed and endeavoured to propagate dangerous errors, I have uniformly laboured to convince you of them; and, if not in a *formal* and *explicit* manner, yet *implicitly* have admonished you with tenderness, and as I hope, with real desires for your best good.

It is solely on account of the ground you have taken with relation to Christ, and to the Holy Spirit, that I have been constrained to suspend exchanges with you, in the hope, which hope I am yet unwilling to relinquish, that you would finally leave that ground, and our former intercourse be restored. Most gladly should I have refrained from taking that step, which was in itself most painful to me, had I thought that I could have refrained from it consistently with duty. And could I believe that the difference of sentiment between us is merely verbal, or circumstantial and unimportant, I should rejoice this day in giving you an invitation to preach to my people.

It is not my object at present to discuss the subject, concerning which we so widely differ. Nor is it necessary, because in our Associations, much of our time, too much perhaps, has already been spent upon it for years.

As I am persuaded, dear Sir, that you have embraced most dangerous and destructive errors, I must solemnly warn you against them. And I entreat and "beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ," to renounce that scheme, which I verily believe is subversive of his gospel, and tends to "drown men in destruction and perdition." So far as I know myself, I say these things, not from ill-will, nor with the least desire to irritate, but with deep concern and most ardent desires for your good, both in time and to eternity. And I pray Him, to whom Stephen prayed with his dying breath, to lead us both into the truth respecting his character, and to make us faithful in his cause unto death.

With due respect, I am, dear Sir,

Your sincere friend,

REV. JACOB NORTON. DANIEL THOMAS.

THE REMARKS,

CONNECTED WITH EXTRACTS.

IN the second paragraph of Mr. T's. letter, he observes,—"When, Sir, I heard you, (Mr. N.) state your leading sentiments in divinity; declare that you had believed them nearly forty years; and signify that you had, since becoming a preacher, uniformly inculcated them from the pulpit, I was constrained to ask myself such questions as the following"——

[To these questions the reader will advert, and judge for himself as to their insinuation and design.]

In reply to this quotation, I have to observe—that I have no recollection of having said or pretended that my religious sentiments were the same, "nearly forty years past," as they are at present, but in a *qualified* manner, however I may have been understood. I am free to confess, as I often have done, that my sentiments respecting the Son, and the Spirit of God, and several other subjects, are different from what they were within the compass of thirty years. And I am willing to add, that my sentiments relative to those subjects are not exactly the same they were ten, or even five years past. I nevertheless "declare" that my leading sentiments in divinity are now, (so far as I am able to make a just comparison between them) *essentially* the same they were at the time, and even before I "became a preacher;" and that so far as I can judge, I have "uniformly inculcated them." That I made a statement like this to the Association, I distinctly recollect; nor do I think that the statement varied from this, excepting merely in words. Willingly would I now make the statement *verbatim* and *entire*, which I then made; but this is impracticable.

You observe in the second paragraph of your letter, that in my communication to our associated brethren, I "charged them with having considered me an heretick, and rejected me." From this charge, as you term it, you take occasion to remark as follows—"I *think* not more than *three* of the Association said things in that discussion, from which it could be inferred that they considered him an heretick, who denies the supreme deity of Christ. Three members were not a majority. Admitting, therefore, that those three considered you an heretick, there was no evidence, at the time, that the Association as a body did."—In what light, Sir, am I to consider the conclusion of your syllogistical reasoning? Am I to consider it as charging me with falsehood? That you intended I should thus consider it, I am very unwilling to believe; and yet I see not how I can disbelieve it. If I really charged the Association with having considered and rejected me as an heretick, as you say I did; and yet if there was *no evidence* at the time to which you refer that the Association as a body did consider and reject me as an heretick, it requires no great discernment to see that my charge was not founded in truth.—As I consider this charge of too serious a nature to be passed unnoticed, I beg leave in my own vindication to say, that a majority of the Association had considered and rejected me as an heretick, in the precise sense of the charge alleged against them. In speaking of them, or any of them as considering and treating me as an heretick, *I have ever referred to their refusal of me as a christian brother, by closing against me the doors of their pulpits.* And that you, Sir, and our other brethren, at the last meeting of our Association, understood me as conveying this, and *no other idea*, I did believe, and without the shadow of a doubt. If you understood me otherwise, I know not how to account for it, and especially as I observed, at that time, that I would not be understood as saying that the Association, as a body, had, *in a formal manner*, rejected me.

A little subsequent to the last quotation I made from your letter, you observe—"If therefore the three persons above mentioned, considered you an heretick, and rejected you, I should say that you also considered them as hereticks, and rejected them, if you believe there is any such thing in existence as heresy. Hence, if they at that time rejected you without admonition, as you seem to think, you then did the same with respect to them. It follows, therefore, that the censure, which, in your communication you pass on them, for so doing, falls also on yourself."—Whether this mode of reasoning, is, in your view, satisfactory and

conclusive, I pretend not to say. But this I can with perfect sincerity and truth say, that in my estimation it is very far from being either satisfactory, or possessing *any force;* nor do I see any reason that you should not view the subject as I do. How, I desire to know, have I rejected the brethren of our Association to whom you allude? *By expressing the wish, to maintain ministerial intercourse and fellowship with them?* If in *any other sense* I have rejected them, I am certainly ignorant of it.

The next passage in your letter, which I consider as deserving particular notice is this—"You informed us (the Association) that some of the members had refused to exchange with you, and when requested to give you their reasons in writing, had refused to do it. Here I suppose you had exclusive reference to Dr. Strong and myself—he and I did inform you that under existing circumstances, we felt that we could not consistently exchange with you at present. You requested us to give you our reasons in writing. This we refused. But we did not refuse to give them verbally. This circumstance ought not to have been omitted in your communication. While a part of the truth respecting the matter was told, a part of it was suppressed, which was calculated to make a wrong impression, &c." That I requested you and the late Dr. Strong to give me your reasons, in writing, for your refusal to exchange with me, agreeably to your statement, is correct. But that in making this observation, I told but part of the truth respecting the matter, which ought to have been told; or that I suppressed truth, and in such a manner as was likely to make a wrong impression on the mind of any person, who heard my communication, I do not see, nor can I admit. According to your own statement, my request to you was that you would give me your reasons *in writing*, and that you *refused to do it.* Now because I observed that you refused to give *written reasons*, does it follow that I insinuated, you did not give *verbal ones?* If what I said on the subject involved *any* insinuation, it must, it should seem, have been this—that you *did* give verbal reasons. And you are too well acquainted with the import and force of language, I should think, not to see and acknowledge the correctness of this remark. But however this may be, you will permit me to say that I meant to speak the truth, and undisguisedly "respecting the matter;" nor do I discover any thing, even in your own statement, which leads me to believe, or suspect that I did not.

The greater part of the paragraph in your letter which immediately follows the last quotation, "I deem quite

unnecessary at present to discuss." A few passages only, I shall notice.

That I have "censured people in many places, because they would not read my books," I do not admit. I hope, however, that I may be permitted to say, and without offence, that if they were more extensively *read*, the truths which they contain would be more extensively *known*—the sentiments of their author would be better *understood*, and his design of promoting the cause of truth, and of vindicating christian liberty, would be likely to be carried, more fully into *effect*. That in "some places my sentiments respecting Christ have been grossly misrepresented, and that I have been considered as maintaining that he is no more than a mere man," I have probably expressed as my belief. And that this, and *much more* than this has indeed been the case, I have the most unambiguous and plenary evidence. And that this evidence would be irresistibly convincing to multitudes, if they would but seek it where *it is to be found*, I have not the shadow of a doubt. Whether any members of our Association have been instrumental to this misrepresentation, as you say I have suggested, in a "covert way," I will not peremptorily decide; but that this has *really* been the case I have but too much reason very strongly to suspect. In saying this, however, I would not be understood as insinuating that they have "done the deed," either with evil intent or with design. I am willing to believe they have not. And that you, Sir, "have *not* misrepresented my sentiments, either to your own people, or to any others, I wish to believe. Nor would I insinuate that you have *designedly* done it. But that you have made no misrepresentations of me and of my sentiments, (however undesignedly) I can by no means believe.

You have the candour to say, that you "know it would be ungenerous and unfair, to say the least, were you to call me a Socinian."—To be sure it would be, as you could not call me so consistently with truth. But is it generous and fair in *you* to say, that you "have often *heard me* pronounce Trinitarians to be" Socinians?—I certainly have no recollection of ever having made this declaration to you, or in your hearing, or to any other person. I well remember, however, to have said, that while I did *not charge* them with being Socinians, I was unable to discover any real, or essential difference between *Trinitarianism* and *Socinianism* in relation to the *character of Christ*. I must believe, Sir, that you have *never* heard me say that Trinitarians are Socinians, but in *this qualified sense*. And is it not true, that the theory of

each sect, acknowledges Christ to be a *man*, who, as to his "true body and reasonable soul," began to exist in the reign of Augustus Cesar, the Roman emperor?—that he was enabled to perform miracles, because God was with him, or united to him?—that he suffered and died on the cross, and that God raised him from the dead, and highly exalted him?—We find, indeed, a *verbal* difference in the two theories; but that the difference is *real*, and of *any consequence*, I confess, I do not see. Thus much I have repeatedly said, nor do I think that, in substance, you have ever heard me say more.

At the beginning of the next paragraph in your letter, you say—"In your communication, after expressing your surprise that in my discourse at Dr. Strong's funeral, I pronounced him a Trinitarian, you informed us that my assertion must have been made through ignorance, or else it was wilful misrepresentation."—The truth of this statement, when *duly qualified*, I readily admit. But the charge of *wilful* misrepresentation I did not allege against you, whether you were guilty of it or not. I did, however, express it as my belief, that through ignorance you had stated an error. And of this, I have now not the least doubt, unless Dr. Strong's sentiments of the Trinity, and particularly with respect to the character of Jesus Christ, were different, a short time before his death, from what they had been some time previously to that event. You say, also, that I affirmed I "knew that the deceased was *not* a Trinitarian."—But in what sense, Sir, did I speak of this our deceased brother, as not having been a Trinitarian? Did I not *distinctly* say, that as Trinitarianism is construed in a variety of ways, I would be understood as representing him a *dissenter* from the doctrine, *as stated in the Assembly's Catechism*, which represents the Son of God as uniting himself to a man, whose existence commenced somewhat more than eighteen centuries past, which doctrine I considered as unadulterated Trinitarianism. These, probably, are not precisely the words which I used; but that they comprise the substance of what I said before the Association on the subject, I fully believe: nor do I think that you will question the correctness of this statement. In this connexion, I think it my duty to add, that not long before his death, a gentleman of unquestionable veracity has repeatedly said, and who is ready to affirm under the solemnity of an oath, "that Dr. S. observed to him he was *not* a Trinitarian, and that he knew not but my sentiments in relation to the doctrine of the Trinity, *were true*."—And that he was considered as being in sentiment with me on this subject, some time

before his death, by a number of his brethren in the ministry, and others, who were intimately conversant with him, is a truth not to be questioned.*

In making these statements, of the truth of which I have not the least doubt, my object most certainly is, neither to "injure the dead nor the living." Neither is it my design to insinuate that the late Dr. Strong is not to be considered as having been a Trinitarian in *any sense* of the word. I would be understood only to say that he was not a Trinitarian, as were the framers of the Westminster catechism; as the professors in the Theological Institution at Andover, and the "General Association in Massachusetts," profess to be. Nor, I will add, was he a Trinitarian, in the *Hopkinsian* sense of the word.

You will not question, I presume, that the Westminster assembly of divines were Trinitarians, or that the Theological professors at Andover, or that the General Association, are, *professedly*, believers in the doctrine of the Trinity, as stated in the "Assembly's Shorter Catechism." Nor will you question that the late venerable Dr. S. Hopkins was *strictly* a Trinitarian. But did our late brother believe in the doctrine of the Trinity as stated either in the catechism, or the writings of Dr. H.? This Sir, you will not pretend, as you *well know*, that Dr. Strong believed that the human or *created* soul of Christ, (as he expressed it) existed before the foundation of the world; and that this was the *only* human soul which ever belonged to his person. But this view of Christ is not exhibited in the Assembly's Catechism. It is indeed a view of Christ very *repugnant* to the Trinitarian theory, and directly opposite to the view of Dr. Hopkins.

According to this writer, "The human nature of Christ began to exist, when it was conceived in the virgin Mary, and not before. The Scripture history of his conception and birth, or the incarnation, and all that is said of it, (the Dr. observes) naturally leads to this conclusion. The reader will have no other idea suggested to his mind, unless he has some particular end to answer by rejecting it, &c." "Such there have been in former ages, and such there are now in the christian world, who are confident that the soul, or rational creature, which was united to a body in the incarnation, did not then begin to exist, but is the first creature that was made, &c." This sentiment Dr. Hopkins decidedly opposes as having no foundation in scripture. He then adds, "The doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul of Jesus Christ, or of that created nature which took a body in the womb of the virgin Mary, appears first to be invented and propagated by

* See Appendix, No. 2.

Arius, in the fourth century, and since his time, by his followers, &c." (Hopkins' System, Vol. I. 2d ed. p. 350.)

There are others, especially of late, who, though they profess to believe that Jesus Christ is God, in a sense in which the Arians deny it; and that the human nature has a personal union with the Deity; yet hold with the Arians, that the created nature of the Redeemer, his body excepted, existed before his incarnation, and was the first creature that was created, &c." (p. 351.) This view of the subject, the Dr. observes, "appears to be contrary to the current of scripture, and of a dangerous and bad tendency." (p. 354.) Again, "This supposed first and greatest creature cannot, with any propriety or truth, be called a *human soul*, more than any other supposeable, or possible creature, that could be made; nor would his union to a human body make him any more a human soul, than if he were not so united." (p. 355.) Such, Sir, were the views of Dr. H. respecting the "doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul of Jesus Christ," a doctrine which our deceased brother firmly believed. Nor do you doubt, I presume, that he believed it to the day of his death.

Now, Sir, since Dr. Hopkins and other Trinitarian writers, generally, if not universally, consider this doctrine as *anti*-Trinitarian, can you reasonably charge me* with injuring the dead and the living, because I represented Dr. Strong as Dr. Hopkins and other Trinitarian writers have done, an anti-trinitarian? Or can you justify yourself, in having unqualifiedly asserted, on a very solemn and public occasion, that he was a Trinitarian, and in persisting in that assertion? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.

Never, Sir, I presume, have I represented Dr. Strong, by any means so forcibly as an *anti*-trinitarian, and as heretical in this respect, as he is represented by Dr. Hopkins, who, in addition to the above quotations, in speaking of the doctrine of the "pre-existence of the soul of Christ," plainly intimates that the theory of our late brother, makes that "holy thing" born of the Virgin Mary, a "*monster!*" His words are, "Mary's conception of her Son did imply the conception of soul and body, otherwise she could not be said to conceive a Son. She who conceives and brings forth a son, is as really, and as much the mother of his soul, as of his body, and

* To charges and misrepresentations of this kind it was probably owing, that the respectable society of our highly respected deceased brother, were led to treat several of the Association, at his interment, who had been his most intimate and friendly associates, with marks of *pointed* discourtesy and neglect.

the former is conceived and formed in her womb as much as the latter ; and is the greater and chief part of the child or son ; yea, the most essential part, without which, he would not be a son ; but a *monster.*" (p. 355.) Brother Strong, you well know, did believe, that the soul of Christ was *created* and not *conceived* and formed in the womb of the virgin Mary. If then, Dr. Hopkins' theory be correct, must not that holy thing which Dr. Strong believed was formed in the womb of the Virgin, have been a monster ! Besides, must not this our deceased brother, have viewed *that character* of Christ as a *creature*, which Dr. Hopkins acknowledged and adored as the *Creator ?*

Elsewhere he speaks of Dr. Strong's theory as " taking away and annihilating the divinity of Christ," and as " really subverting Christianity."

Such, Sir, are the charges which *real* Trinitarianism brings against the theory of the late Dr. Strong ; and such are the censures which it levels against him !

This, Sir, is a subject which I would gladly have left forever to slumber. But *justice*, as well to the *dead*, as to the *living*, has constrained me to make this exhibition of it. Your assertion, then, that Dr. Strong *was* a Trinitarian, was calculated, I am persuaded, to make a wrong impression on the minds of your hearers. Nor do I see how you can justify yourself in making it. Had you have asserted that he was *not* an advocate for Trinitarianism, as " expressed in the Assembly's Shorter Catechism," and as professedly advocated by the Institutions above-mentioned, or as stated by the late Dr. Hopkins, would not your assertion, (which would have been *strictly true*) have made an impression on the minds of your hearers, *very widely different* from *that* which *was produced* by the assertion which you actually did make ? As there can be no doubt of this, so I considered your conduct unjustifiable in making that assertion in the unqualified manner in which you did make it. Of this, " in faithfulness," I made you acquainted at the last meeting of our Association. In doing it, I but discharged a duty which I could not neglect consistently with my sense of *fraternal friendship and fidelity*.

From the above observations, you must perceive, that particularly to notice several remarks, which you have made on my " taxing you with ignorance, &c." of the late Dr. Strong's sentiments respecting the Trinity, would be both needless and impertinent, at least in my opinion. The following observations, however, are of too serious a nature to be neglected. " Doubtless," you say, " I am ignorant, but not of Dr. Strong's sentiments on this sub-

ject, (the doctrine of the Trinity ;) and had I represented them as you do, I should then have been really guilty of wilful misrepresentation, and should have injured both the dead and the living."—Since, Sir, you are not ignorant of Dr. Strong's sentiments respecting the doctrine of the Trinity, permit me to ask, whether, in any statement I have made, in this communication, I have contradicted a single sentiment, which you have ever heard *him* advance on that subject ? Rather, I would ask, do you not *know* that he was *not* a Trinitarian in the sense in which I have represented him not to have been ? If you do not know this, you are yet to learn what his real sentiments were. But if I have not *now* misrepresented his sentiments, you have never heard me misrepresent them, I am fully persuaded. Will you then persist in saying, that you would be guilty of *wilful* misrepresentation of the sentiments of our deceased brother, were you to represent them as *I have done ?* I think, Sir, that a little serious reflection on the subject will convince you that you cannot do it with a good conscience. The insinuation in the passage above quoted, that *I* have wilfully misrepresented our deceased brother, I shall dismiss with recommending it to your impartial review and conscientious consideration. I pray you to bestow this attention upon it, and then seriously ask yourself whether that insinuation is " the way to repair breaches,"—" to heal wounds"—to " promote harmony, peace and love ?"

In the next paragraph, Mr. T. charges me with having " strenuously defended both by conversation, and writing, and preaching, a scheme which is substantially *arian.*"

The cry of *Arianism* to those who understand its import as little as that gentleman *seems* to understand it, is proof, positive, " that the supposed advocate of it is a heretick—an infidel, and a reprobate." For *his* information, therefore, as well as their's, the following statement which is *substantially* arian, is respectfully submitted—" Arians are the followers of Arius, a presbyter of the church of Alexandria, about 315, who maintained that the Son of God was totally and essentially distinct from the Father ; that he was the first and noblest of those beings whom God had *created* : also that the Holy Ghost was not God, but *created* by the *power of the Son.*"—If my sentiments are substantially arian, *Arianism must be substantially different from itself.*

The next passage in your letter, which I consider as claiming particular attention, is as follows.—" Your meeting with the Association, and occasionally exchanging with a majority of the members, proves that they have

not rejected you as an heretick. Hence your complaint, that they have rejected you without admonition, is unfounded."—What construction, Sir, would you have me put on this passage? or what would you have me think of its author? If you would have me understand you as saying, that of the *seven* of my associated brethren, I exchange occasionally with *two*, and but two *only*, I should admit your statement as *true*, and *not otherwise*.—If the circumstance that I occasionally exchange with these *two* brethren, proves that the Association have *not* rejected me as an heretick, then proof exists, that they have not rejected me, *otherwise* the evidence does *not exist*. And if the circumstance that a *majority* of the Association *have* rejected me as an heretick, without admonition, proves that they have *not* thus rejected me, then my "complaint is unfounded," and *not otherwise*. If you meant to be understood according to *this exposition* of the above quoted passage, I will readily admit its correctness, otherwise, *I cannot do it with even the shadow of truth*. But, Sir, if you meant to have been understood in a sense *directly opposite* to the import of your expressions, you ought to have given some intimation of it. But if you did not intend to be understood as *meaning* the very *reverse* of what you have *said*, must I not think your statements *somewhat inaccurate!* Yet whether the above statements are *less* inaccurate than several others in your letter, is not a little problematical.

In the last paragraph but one of your letter, you express it as your belief, that I have imbibed dangerous errors in relation to the doctrine of the Trinity. For this admonition, which seems to have been kindly intended, you will have the goodness to accept my grateful acknowledgements. But what you intend by saying, "I have uniformly laboured to convince you of them, (errors,) and implicitly admonished you with tenderness, and as I hope, with real desires for your best good," I am utterly unable to determine.

What your labours of love, and your tender admonitions to reclaim me from my supposed dangerous errors, have been, *I know not*, unless they have consisted in *absenting* yourself from my house for nearly eighteen months, and probably twice the length of that time, excepting your attendance *there* with the Association, once within the last mentioned period;—unless they have consisted in your *neglect* to write to me on the subject of my heresy—your *neglect* definitely to state to me any of my supposed errors—your *neglect* to converse with me on the subject of my erroneous sentiments at *any time*, excepting when we

were brought together on Association occasions; and your treating me on those, and some other occasions, in a manner, as I have thought, *not* very indicative of a spirit of friendship and conciliation.

This, Sir, has been your "uniform" manner of labouring to convince me of my errors;—*thus* have you "admonished" me with "tenderness" for my best good! And now you have terminated your benevolent labours with me by an epistle, which was written "certainly not from ill will, nor with the least desire to irritate; not to increase difficulties subsisting between us, but with deep concern and most ardent desires for my best good both in time and to eternity!"—For your *desires* for my best good, you have my warmest thanks; but for the manner in which you have *expressed them*, I cannot, as I wish to do, make a similar acknowledgment.

REFLECTIONS.

This is the substance of the remarks I made on those passages in the Rev. Mr. Thomas' letter of 3d of last February, which I considered as "incorrect and exceptionable;" which remarks, in publishing my answer to that letter, I suppressed, because I had understood Mr. T. "in a personal interview with him," to have "explained and qualified" them in such a manner as to admit that they *were incorrect and exceptionable;* and because he "could not give his consent" that his letter should be published.

That Mr. T. should ever have given me just occasion to make these remarks, has ever been with me a subject of deep regret; but that he discovered, as I supposed, so much of the spirit of a christian in the personal interview before mentioned, as to make me think it expedient to suppress the remarks, afforded me much pleasure and satisfaction. Consoling to my mind was the reflection that misunderstanding between us of a personal nature was cleared up and happily settled; nor could I have believed that it was otherwise, but for his lately printed letter. And most sincerely do I grieve that he has made those parts of it public, of which the above remarks are a review.—I grieve, not from an apprehension that my character, as respects my own people, or any others, who are well acquainted with "my manner of life from my youth," will suffer from it; but from other considerations which I fear will occasion my brother deep and unavailing regret.

Whether the passages in question are really incorrect and exceptionable, the reader, viewing them in the

light in which they have now been placed, will judge for himself. It is my sincere wish and hope that he will judge as favourably of them, and of their author, as he possibly can do, consistently with truth. So far as I know my own heart, I can truly say that it harbors not a desire to injure Mr. T. in any degree, or in any way. It is my heart's desire and prayer to God, that he may be in health and prosper—especially that his soul may prosper—that he may so conduct as to be greatly beloved and highly respected by the people of his charge, and by all who take knowledge of him—that he may be eminently useful, and that he may hereafter, through grace, receive an exceeding great reward.

I cannot, however, but say, that in speaking of the passages under consideration, as *incorrect* and *exceptionable*, I did think that I used terms as mild and unexceptionable, as I possibly could have done consistently with truth and propriety; nor do I now find any reason to think otherwise. I did think also, that in representing Mr. T. as having explained and qualified those passages, I was so far from having acted an improper and injurious part in relation to his character, that on the contrary, I really vindicated it from the imputation of disingenuousness and falsehood, which might be attached to it. And in this light I now view the subject. Nor do I see how he can possibly avoid that imputation, but by a frank and explicit acknowledgement, that the statements which he has made, are not only *incorrect*, *but flagrantly erroneous*. In the hope that he will yet see his obligation to make this acknowledgement—that he will be disposed promptly to make it, and thus preserve his reputation from merited reproach, secure his own usefulness, and the cause of truth from suffering—" In the hope" of this, I dismiss the very unpleasant subject, earnestly entreating Mr. T. to review it with seriousness and impartiality,—and then to think and act in relation to it as truth and justice may require.

I am next to consider the

APPENDIX OF MR. T'S. LETTER.

My remarks on this will be but brief and cursory, as it contains but very little aside from the contents of his letter.

In the *first note* of this appendix, Mr. T. states several things which he has *heard*, and of what he has *credibly been informed*, all which are designed to substantiate the fact that my theological sentiments have not been the

same in different periods of my ministerial life, and to make it appear that my "assertions, that I have *not* changed them, unaccountable and surprising."—That such assertions should appear to Mr. T. or to any other man of any reflection, unaccountable and surprising, on supposition that I had made them, is not to be wondered at, as no man, I should suppose, who did not "possess the gift of infallibility," would be likely to make theological subjects his pursuit for thirty years, without finding occasion, in a greater or less degree, to "change" his sentiments. Besides, had Mr. T. have heard me make such "assertions," I do not wonder that it should appear to him unaccountable and surprising, *as*, during an intimate acquaintance with me for a series of years, he never found even the shadow of a reason, I would presume, to question my strict and sacred regard to truth. But notwithstanding the unaccountableness and the surprising circumstance of the *supposed fact*, the *real fact* is, that I have never made the assertions under consideration, excepting in the qualified sense, as already stated. Perhaps, however, I ought not to be thus peremptory. I will therefore say that I have never with *design* made them; that I do not *recollect* ever to have made them, and that I am *well persuaded* that *I never did make them.*—In saying these things, however, I would not be understood to impeach Mr. Thomas' veracity, but only to suggest, that his saying I had repeatedly asserted that I had uniformly believed and inculcated the same doctrines, and had never changed my theological sentiments, is to me truly "unaccountable and surprising."

Mr. T. observes in this note, that he has "heard from the mouth of one of my parishioners, till lately, much opposed to my preaching, and that he is very credibly informed, that others of the same character, are heard to utter expressions of the same import, that I do not preach such hard things, &c."—"This," he adds, "accords with the current and undisputed report, the truth of which Mr. N. himself did not question, when I once mentioned it to him, that the opposition of his former opposers was gradually subsiding, and that they, without any apparent alteration in them, began to be pleased with him (Mr. N.) as a preacher."—From this quotation, it should seem, that Mr. T. is much better acquainted with the subject of opposition to my preaching, among my parishioners, and the strength of that opposition with respect to past time, and its "subsiding" at the present time, than I am myself; also of "*current* and undisputed report." But by what authority he should peremptorily say, that "no ap-

parent alteration in my former opposers" had taken place, and that I " did not question" this, I know not, nor can I satisfactorily conjecture.

That some of my parishioners have, in *times past*, disapproved of some of my theological sentiments, and that some of them *now do*, I doubt not; but whether those same sentiments meet with less opposition at the present moment, than has heretofore been the case, I cannot positively say. It is my hope, however, that they are more generally approved; and with satisfaction I add—I think they are. If this indeed be the case, it may be accounted for from several considerations which I do not think it expedient particularly to mention —*one*, however, I will notice. It is this—An " apparent alteration" *has* taken place among my parishioners, and particularly among that portion of them, to whom I suppose Mr. T. alludes, as my " former opposers." This alteration is as *desirable* as it is *apparent;* and it is such, I humbly hope, with respect to a considerable number of them, as " accompanies salvation." I desire to bless God that I have it my power to make this statement, a statement which, if I mistake not, Mr. T. has heretofore heard me make, and in an *explicit*, but I hope *not* in an ostentatious manner.

As I have already, perhaps, said too much on the subject of this note, I will dismiss it with observing, that if my parishioners, generally, are more attached to me as a preacher now, than they were in time past, it is my ardent hope, that the attachment may continue and increase, to the divine glory, and to our mutual benefit and happiness. And that this desirable object may be happily secured, it is equally my hope that I shall live better, and preach better than I ever yet have done—that I never shall seek in an improper manner, to please men, and that I shall be suffered to do nothing in public or in private, by partiality.

The *second note* of the appendix will now be noticed. The first part of this note refers to an " assertion" which Mr. T. says I made " in my communication," that, " in his discourse at Dr. Strong's funeral, he through ignorance or wilful misrepresentation, had pronounced him, (Dr. S.) a Trinitarian." This assertion he seems to consider as incompatible with *a spirit of fraternal affection, and an ardent desire to promote brotherly love and union*, and that it was not *indicative of a spirit of candor, of serious concern, and of respectful fidelity*.—In reply to this, I have to say—that I made an assertion of like import with Mr. T's. statement, I readily acknowledge; the truth of which assertion, I have, I think, fully substan-

tiated ; but that I made the assertion, agreeably to his statement, as a " slanderous insinuation," I can by no means admit. That my assertion was viewed in this unfavourable light, I had not the slightest suspicion ; nor that it was calculated to make an unfavourable impression with respect to Mr. T's. veracity on the mind of any one who heard it. But if such an impression were made, I sincerely regret it, although I cannot charge myself with it, as a designing, or criminal cause.—As to the *manner* in which I expressed myself on that subject, I will not undertake peremptorily to decide. If it were not indicative of a spirit of candor, of serious concern, and respectful fidelity, I am willing, on being convinced, to confess my fault, and to receive the just and salutary correction of censure.

In the same note, Mr. T. charges me with the guilt of " foul aspersion." This charge is founded on the representation of the treatment which my verbal communication had received from the Association of which I was a member. This communication, I have said, as he observes, " was, to my great disappointment, at the time (it was made) treated by my brethren with the *neglect* of *expressive silence.*"—Whether this declaration were a foul aspersion, the reader will be able to judge on being better acquainted with the subject.—The communication which I made to my associated brethren, who were but *three* in number, was made in the evening of the day on which we met, and after the appropriate business of that day was closed.—It was made, so far as I can judge of my own feelings and views, in a calm and dispassionate manner—with solicitude and deep concern, and with a view to remove misunderstanding and inauspicious impressions ; and to restore fraternal union and intercourse. When I had closed it, I observed, as nearly as I can recollect, that as the evening was far spent, it might not be advisable that any reply should be made to it, till after we had slept, and opportunity should be afforded for mature and serious reflection. The subject was here dropped, and the gentlemen soon retired to bed. I did the same, and with a strong impression on my mind that my brethren could not doubt that I expected they would particularly and distinctly notice my communication the next morning. This I certainly expected. Their neglect to notice it, was, of course, a great disappointment to me.—This is a just statement of the facts of the case. But how a statement of an undeniable *truth*, is a *foul aspersion*, I have yet to learn.

Mr. T. adds, " that before the Association separated, a number of questions were entered upon the docket, for

discussion at their next meeting, which questions included the most material subjects contained in my communication."—Why the gentleman should notice this circumstance, but with the view to fasten upon me the crime of foul aspersion, I know not. But how little it is to his purpose, the reader would be better able to judge, had Mr. T. informed him, that these questions would not, in all probability, have found a place in the docket, had it not been that I prepared the way for it by proposing a question or questions, immediately relating to " the most material things" contained in this same communication ; and that *he* did not see fit to approve it.

The things, *generally*, contained in the *third note* of the appendix, I consider as having already been fairly and sufficiently noticed. And it is with reluctance that I now persuade myself to make any additional remarks.—In this note, Mr. T. observes that " Trinitarianism consists in believing that the one God exists in three equally divine persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost ; and that both divinity and humanity are united in the person of Christ. Dr. Strong believed in this sentiment, and was therefore a real Trinitarian." " And Mr. N. himself, if he will admit, as he ought, that my statement of the scheme is correct, cannot but know that the Dr. professed to be a firm believer in it." To this I reply, that Dr. Strong professed to believe as I do, that the soul of Jesus Christ was super-angelic—that it existed before the foundation of the world—that for this soul God prepared the body which was born of the virgin Mary—that this was the soul and the *only* soul which became incarnate, or became united to that body, and that Jesus Christ, as consisting of this soul and body, suffered and died " under Pontius Pilate, to make an atonement for sin, &c.—And this soul of Christ according to the Dr's. theory, if I have understood him, is the *Logos* or *Word*," the supreme Deity of the Trinitarians. This soul, he did not scruple to say was *created.* Nor do I know of any other " humanity," excepting a body, which he ascribed to Christ. But this kind of humanity is not the humanity of Trinitarianism. The advocates for that theory expressly disclaim it. Dr. Hopkins, who was a decided and acknowledged Trinitarian, observes, " this supposed first and greatest creature, cannot with any propriety or truth, be called a *human soul*, more than any other supposeable or possible creature, that could be made ; nor would his union to a human body make him any more a human soul than if he were not so united." (Hopkins' system, vol. 1st, 2d edit. p. 351.)

Thus much I know and understand in relation to the Trinitarianism of my late and respected brother Strong, so far as I have been able to learn it from his own mouth; nor do I wish for a better voucher for the truth of what I have stated, than some of his manuscript sermons and essays, if they have not been destroyed.

I have now discharged, with respect to this subject, what I considered as a duty, and what I have felt, and do feel as a very unpleasant one.—Gladly do I dismiss the subject, with only observing, that the things which I omit to notice in the note, are either too mysterious to be understood, or too invidious to claim a reply.

As the *fourth note* of the appendix is little else but a repetition of the same things, it were needless particularly to notice it any further than by observing, that had it breathed a more candid and christian spirit, it would, I should think, be more to the reputation of its author.

In *note fifth*, Mr. T. observes, "Since the letter was written (Mr. T's. letter of Feb. 3,) Mr. N. has told me that he did not exchange with a majority of the Association, yet he admitted that a majority had not explicitly refused to exchange with him. There was, therefore, no evidence, at the time, that the intercourse between him and them was actually broken off."—In what light Mr. T. would have me and his readers view this quotation; or what impression he would have it make, I will not positively say. I think, however, that it is calculated to make an impression on the mind of the reader, who is unacquainted with the facts of the case, very widely different from the impression, which a correct and "unvarnished tale" would make.—The simple facts of the case are—Sometime before Mr. T. wrote his letter, I observed to my associated brethren, that I was desirous to know my situation with them, with respect to exchanges of professional labours.—Agreeably, I proposed an exchange to each of them, whom I considered as viewing me as an heretick;—each declined to comply. In conversation with them, or several of them afterwards, when Mr. T. was present, they suggested that they did not mean to be understood that circumstances might not be such as to open a door for exchanges between us at *some future time*. Nor have I ever heard either of them intimate, from the time I proposed exchanges with them, to the present time, that they were disposed or willing to renew ministerial intercourse with me. I have indeed never thought that this was the case, nor have I ever "admitted" or intimated the thing. This statement, so far as I can trust my memory and understanding, is a fair, correct and circumstantial

exposure of the whole affair. But if "there is no evidence" that intercourse between a majority of my lately associated brethren, has been, or now is "actually broken off," it is my hope and request that they will have the goodness to give me the information.

As Mr. T. does "not hesitate to *deny*" his assertion, that I "occasionally exchange with a majority of the members" of the late association, to be "incorrect and exceptionable," and as he does not hesitate to *deny* that he has "explained and qualified *several* incorrect statements and exceptionable passages in his letter," I have only to say, "alas, my brother!"

In the *sixth* and *last* note of his appendix, Mr. T. observes, "I have here only to add, that at present, I have *other* reasons *beside* the one mentioned in the letter, for refusing to hold intercourse with Mr. N.—reasons far more weighty than his 'neglecting to use unscriptural and anti-scriptural words and phrases' in his worship, &c."—That *this* my neglect should be *any reason* "for" his "refusing to hold intercourse with me," I sincerely regret.—As to his "other far more weighty reasons," I can, at present, have nothing to say, as I am *wholly ignorant* with respect to their *number*, their *quality*, and their *weight*.

Having thus briefly reviewed the notes of Mr. T's. appendix, I gladly dismiss the unpleasant subject, to examine his "notice of a few of the many things contained in my publication." In doing this, I shall be as brief as the subjects of that notice will admit; nor shall I be forgetful, I hope, that as these subjects are exceedingly momentous, sublime and solemn, they are to be treated with correspondent reverence and solemnity. It is with emotions of uncommon awe and solicitude that I enter on this examination. And humbly do I implore the Fountain of all truth and light, that he would mercifully preserve me not only from error, but from every indecorous expression. The subject which first claims my attention, relates to

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The things which I am to notice under this head are contained in 15, 16, 17 pages of Mr. T's. publication. Here, I will invite the attention of my reader, in the first place to the disagreement which Mr. T. says exists between us in sentiment in relation to the Holy Spirit. "Every one," he observes, "who has the least discernment, must perceive" from my statements, "that our

sentiments on the great point in question, are *radically different and totally discordant.*" In this assertion, I sincerely hope Mr. T. is incorrect. But if it is to be admitted that every one who has the *least* discernment, must perceive this *total discordancy*, I cannot but think that every one who has the *greatest* discernment, or even but a moderate share of discernment, must perceive that the discordancy of our sentiments is *not total.* Mr. T. admits that, according to my statements, the *Holy Ghost*, or *Holy Spirit*, is of the same import with the *breath of God*, *power of God*, or the *emanation of his energetic fulness* :—that *Spirit* of God is always an *impersonal*, or neuter noun—that no expressions of mutual affection occur in the scriptures *between God and the Holy Spirit*, and that *no ascriptions of praise are offered to the Holy Spirit.* He admits also, that agreeably to my statements, the " Holy Spirit is self-existent, eternal, omnipotent, &c. and *not distinct* from the one God, but essentially the *same.*" Such are the representations which Mr. T. seems very desirous to make his readers believe, I have made of the Holy Spirit. And I am, most certainly, equally desirous that they should believe it. But I cannot say that I am equally desirous that any one should believe that these representations " are *radically different*" from, and " *totally discordant*" with his sentiments, as he endeavors to prove.

Mr. T. further observes, that " the Holy Spirit, of whom *I* spoke, is *not* the Holy Spirit of whom the scriptures speak."—But does not *he* speak this, *without* scripture, and even in *direct opposition* to scripture ! That the scriptures *do* speak *all* the things as above stated, with respect to the Holy Spirit, is a fact which no man, I am confident, can deny consistently with truth and soberness. If then Mr. T. is to be understood as he speaks, I readily allow, but with deep concern and regret, that " every one who has the *least* discernment, must perceive that our sentiments" on the great point in question, are " indeed" *radically different*, and *totally discordant.*

Mr. T. in the pages above referred to, strongly insinuates, to say the least, that I do not harmonize with myself in the statements which I have made respecting the Holy Spirit ; that I withhold necessary information with respect to my meaning of the phrase *Holy* Spirit—and that absurd and shocking conclusions in the extreme, necessarily follow from my theory, &c. &c.—In reply to this, I would say, it is not unlikely that I have not so clearly conveyed my ideas " on this great point," as could be wished, or as the subject, difficult as it is, would admit. But if I

have not been understood, I hope that I shall not be denied the privilege of an attempt to explain my meaning.

In whatever I have published respecting the Holy Spirit, my leading object has been to shew that this same Spirit is not a distinct person from the one God, but comprehended in the Being of the one God, is essential to his existence and expressive of his fulness, perfection and glory. But whether by the terms *Holy Ghost—Holy Spirit—Spirit of God, &c. all this* is always expressed, I would by no means positively decide. I think it probable, however, that these terms are sometimes used in a restrictive sense, designating only a particular perfection or attribute of God. In favour of this sentiment are the following examples.—Impious and incorrigible transgressors are represented as brought to destruction by the "*breath* of the Lord,"—and by "the *Spirit* of the Lord."—"By the *blast* of God they perish, and by the *breath of his mouth* they are consumed." "By his *Spirit* he hath garnished the heavens;" but "the heavens are the work of his *hand*"—of "his *fingers*."

It will not, I presume, by any reflecting and unbiassed mind, be denied or even questioned, that by the *breath*, *blast*, *hand* and *fingers* of God, the *Spirit* of God is intended. But when *Spirit* of God is used synonimously with those terms, must it not be expressive of his power? Why then should it be thought improper to speak of the Spirit of God, in *this view*, as "a *thing?*" Does the *power* of God import *precisely* the same thing as *God himself?* Besides, must it not be deemed highly improper and incongruous to speak of *breath*, *hand* and *fingers*, as a distinct and co-ordinate person with him, to whom the breath, hand, and fingers belong!

The Spirit of God is represented by several metaphors, which seem incompatible with the idea that God and his Spirit are two distinct and co-equal persons—such as *water*, *fire*, and *anointing oil*.—Now that water *poured forth*, *sprinkling* with water, the *operation* of fire which may *be quenched*, and the act of *anointing* with the oil of gladness, are emblematical representations of the Spirit of God, will admit, it is presumed, of no controversy. But do these representations favour the sentiment, that the Spirit of God is a *personal* existence, and in distinction from God himself whose Spirit it is!

When we pray that God would pour out his Spirit, do we mean to invoke one self-existent person, to *pour* out another *self-existent and co-equal person?* Are we ever understood in this sense!—Besides, what, I would also ask, do the scriptures mean by the *residue* of the Spirit?

Is not the natural import of the phrase obviously this—that the Spirit or influence of God is *never exhausted*? But if the Spirit were a person, and God were to pour out this person, where, or what would be the *residue?*

As it is my principal object in this place to make the representation, which I have heretofore made of the Holy Spirit, more intelligible, I shall attempt no elaborate discussion of the subject.

The above remarks are designed to show that the Holy Spirit is not a person distinct from the one God, but that which is comprehended in the Being of the one God, and essential to his existence—that the term *Spirit* is expressive of his *power*, and that, as it is sometimes used, there can be no impropriety in speaking of the Spirit as a *thing*, and that it may with as much propriety be thus spoken of as the term, *power* of God. Some of the above quotations and remarks are not to be considered in this restrictive sense, but are expressive, perhaps, of the fulness, or all-sufficiency of God. Although a single attribute of God seems sometimes to be particularly intended by the term Spirit, yet I am far from believing that it is used in this restrictive sense, so as to exclude his other attributes. I have indeed, no doubt, that the terms Holy Ghost, Holy Spirit, &c. in their *various applications*, express all those attributes of God, which are implied in his FULNESS, or ALL-SUFFICIENCY.

As the one God then, is "self-existent, eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, infinite in holiness, in truth and goodness," must not the Holy Spirit be self-existent, &c? In other words, are not the *perfections* of the one God, such as the scriptures represent them to be? But do these perfections constitute a person "*distinct* from the one God, in any other than in an *improper or figurative sense*?"

Such are my views of the Holy Spirit, nor have I conveyed, as I believe, any sentiments which clash with the above statements, or which clash one with another; yet Mr. T. seems very desirous to make his readers believe, that I represent the *one God* as not being "a person in any other than an *improper* and *figurative sense*, only an *emanation* of his own energetic fulness—only the breath of God." "These conclusions," he observes, "though absurd and shocking in the extreme, necessarily follow from Mr. N's. theory."

That Mr. T. should make this representation of my views of the Holy Spirit, I am as greatly grieved as surprised. I am persuaded that he had no ground or reason for making it; nor can I but believe, that had he duly at-

tended to the subject, he would have been as fully convinced of this, as I am. If I had made any statements respecting the Holy Spirit, aside from those made in the *scriptures* of truth, why did he not shew, or attempt to shew from these scriptures, that I had done so? This might reasonably have been expected of him. But he has not done it; nor is it easy to assign any *other reason* for this, than that my statements are *perfectly scriptural.* And that they are so, in deed, and in truth, no one, I should think, would question, who has made the scriptures his guide in relation to the subject.

Nor am I less grieved and surprised that Mr. T. after admitting that I represent the Holy Spirit "essentially the same as the one supreme God," should say, that from my representation, "every one who has the least discernment must perceive that our sentiments on the great point in question, are *radically different*, are *totally discordant*!" Most sincerely do I hope that the pen of Mr. T. through mistake, neither expressed his belief, nor executed his will. But if this hope is not to be indulged, I see not but I must infer, that he does not believe the Holy Spirit to be essentially the same as the one supreme God.

What Mr. T. says with respect to the distinct *personality* of the Holy Spirit, and several other things, I do not understand. I shall therefore pass them without further notice.

The subject now to be noticed is Mr. Thomas' review of my sentiments respecting

THE CHARACTER OF THE SON OF GOD.

In p. 18, of his pamphlet, he expresses dissatisfaction that I should have attempted "to prove that 'we harmonize in sentiment,' respecting Jesus Christ," in relation to what he calls his highest character; and in subsequent pages he endeavours to prove that "there is not only a *real*, but a *very great* difference" between us "in sentiment, respecting the character of Christ," and indeed, that our sentiments "are *totally opposite.*" (p. 20.)—Whether this be really the case, I will not undertake positively to decide. I had however indulged the hope and belief, that our sentiments respecting this very important subject, were not so widely different as he thinks, and represents them to be. I had indulged the hope also that I should be able to convince him that the disagreement between us, was "rather *seeming* than *real.*" Nor am I now willing to abandon the hope that this is really the case. But as my brother seems very desirous to make it appear

that we are, and *must* be *antipodal* to each other in opinion, respecting "the highest character of Jesus Christ," and as this may really be the case, I shall not attempt to prove the identity of our opinions. My principal object will be to examine his theory, and to test it both by reason and revelation.

Mr. T. (p. 18.) professes to believe with me, "that Christ cannot be the supreme God by virtue of the union of which I speak," that is, a union "in consent, affection, design, and pursuit." Although he says, "I believe that there is perfect unity of affection, design and pursuit between Christ and the Father, yet it is not on account of any such union as this, that I consider Christ as being God."—If I understand this passage and several others of a similar nature which occur in his pamphlet, Mr. T. does not consider Christ, as God, by virtue of any *moral* union which subsists between him and his Father. But if this be not the union which subsists between Christ, in his supposed highest character, and his Father, by which he becomes God, on Trinitarian ground, I cannot even conjecture in what the union does consist. Is not the union between the *Trinitarian* first and second person in the Godhead, of a *moral nature?* and is not this the union by which the second person *is God*, and by which they both are *one Being?* This, I have supposed, Trinitarians would readily admit. But should they deny it, I would ask, what *other* union than that of a *moral* nature, can possibly exist between two persons *purely spiritual?* What other union than this, can there be between God, and the Trinitarian second person, and his human or "reasonable soul?" Or what other union than that of a moral nature, can reasonably be supposed to exist between the supposed complex character of Christ, or two souls, divine and human, and the one God, the Father? If this be not the Trinitarian union between Christ and the Father, by virtue of which it is *supposed* that Christ is God, most gladly would I learn from them what it is. Although Mr. T. does not consider Christ as being God, on account of any such union as this, yet this is the only union, I am persuaded, on which he can ground his belief, that Christ is the supreme God; for no other union than this, it is believed, *can exist* between Christ and his Father.

"I and my Father are one." John x. 30. This declaration of Christ, furnishes satisfactory evidence to the minds of Trinitarians, if I understand them, that he is God, the *one God with his Father*. But because Christ and his Father are *one*, does it follow that Christ is the supreme Father, or that he is equal to his Father in power and glo-

ry? Or does it follow that the union subsisting between them is any other than that of a *moral* nature?—If Christ by this declaration claimed to be the supreme God, or to be equal to the supreme God his Father, is it not very strange and unaccountable, that in this same chapter, he should have spoken of himself as "the good shepherd who giveth his life for the sheep;" as having "received commandment of his Father," as "doing the works which he did, in his Father's name?"—Besides, what are we to understand by his declaration, "My Father, which gave them me (the sheep) is greater than all?"—Can it reasonably be admitted that the *supreme God* gave *his life* as a ransom for his people, denominated sheep?—that he *received commandment* from any other? or that in the *name of another* he performed wonderful works? or that any *other person or being* is *greater* than *himself*, *greater* than *all?*

Should it be urged that the *Jews* considered Christ as claiming to be God, or equal to God his Father, when he said, "I and my Father are one;" that Christ *meant* so to be understood by them, and therefore it must be inferred from his declaration, that he is indeed the supreme God,—the argument will not be admitted as good, nor even as *plausible*; for, notwithstanding the captious and malignant Jews charged him with making himself God, Christ, so far from admitting the justness of the charge, shows them by an unanswerable argument, that it was unfounded.—"Jesus answered them, is it not written in your law, I said, ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God," in acknowledging God as my Father? The true import of this answer of Christ seems most obviously to be—"Your own scriptures, the authority of which cannot be broken or controverted, give the title of *gods* even to *magistrates*, on account of the peculiar relation they have to God, by virtue of their office.—If then this sublime title, *ye are gods*, which was given to magistrates by God himself, is applicable to *them*, how can you charge *me* with blasphemy, or how can you reasonably pretend that I assume to be God, for taking the title of *the Son of God*, seeing that my Father hath *sanctified* me, and *sent* me into the world, setting me apart for the great purpose of instructing mankind into his will, and to execute an higher office than that of magistrates? and when the certainty of this my commission is incontestibly proved by the works which I do before you

in my Father's name? If I have attributed any thing divine to myself, I did not do it as making myself the supreme God; but as acknowledging him to be the Fountain and Spring of all that divine power I spoke of as being in me, which the words made use of, *Father* and *Son*, plainly imply."—Whether the *Jews* understood Christ as assuming to be the supreme God, when he said *I and my Father are one*, may reasonably be doubted; but I see not how it can reasonably be doubted, that in his reply to their charge, he meant *unequivocally to disclaim that assumption.*

Now, since Christ in saying, I and my Father are one, did not claim to be the one supreme God, nor to be equal to the one supreme God, what could he have intended by the oneness, or union between himself and his Father, but that of a *moral nature?* Will Trinitarians undertake to prove, or do they believe that any union but of this kind subsists between *God* and any *dependent being?* I presume not. But does not Christ plainly teach us that the oneness or union between christians, between christians and himself, and between christians and the one God, is the same, in kind, as the union which subsists between himself and his Father? If this be not the case, what are we to understand by his praying "Holy Father, keep through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are—that they may all be one; as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may know that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that *they* may be *one*, *even as we are one.*" I know not how any attentive and unprejudiced mind can read this prayer of Christ, without being satisfactorily convinced, that the oneness which subsists between christians themselves—between christians and Christ, and between christians and God the Father, is the same, in kind, with that which subsists between Christ and the Father. But "it is not on account of any such union as this," says Mr. T. "that I consider Christ as being God." On what account then, is it that he believes the doctrine? It is *not*, so far as I can see, on account of *any union whatever* between Christ and his Father.

According to his own statement, (p. 18, 19,) Mr. T. believes that "both *real humanity*, and *real divinity* belong to the *person* of Jesus Christ; or that *he himself is* '*the man Christ Jesus*,' *and the true God.*" In other words, he says, "when I speak of Christ in what I call his *lowest* character, I mean to speak of him as being a man, as *truly so*, as any of Adam's race, as being the 'seed of Abraham, the offspring of David,' and in all things made

like unto his brethren. And when I speak of Christ in what I call his *highest* character, I mean that *he himself is the supreme Jehovah.* Paul expresses my views upon this subject, where, speaking of Israel, he says, " of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever."—As this quotation contains things, which to me are hard to be understood, I know not whether it will be in my power to do justice either to them or their author. It shall be my aim, however, to do justice to both. If I understand him, Mr. T. expresses it as his belief that Jesus Christ is properly a *person*, and but *one person only ;* and that this one person consists both of *real humanity*, and *real divinity*, or that this one person is a man and as *truly so*, as any other man, and yet that *he himself is the supreme Jehovah* ! But that Mr. T. or any other man *really* believes this more than strange doctrine, I know not how to admit, although I do not question that he and many others *think* they believe it.

If the *person*, Jesus Christ, is *himself* as truly a *man*, as any of Adam's race, can it be true, or can it be proper to say, that *this same person*, is *the supreme Jehovah !* What is this but to say that a *human* person or being is *divine*, and that a *divine* person or being is *human !*—that a *creature* is the *creator*, and that this same *creator* is a *creature ;* and that a *dependent* person or being is *independent* ; and that an *independent* person or being is *dependent !* Mr. T. I doubt not will object to this representation as inadmissible. But I do not see that he can *reasonably* make the objection, but by *objecting to his own theory*, as I understand it. But as this representation evidently involves a gross absurdity, Mr. T. in order to avoid it, may say that he considers what he calls the lowest character in Christ's person, as *so* united and blended with the supposed highest character, as to constitute *one essence* or *substance*. But should he say this, I do not see that it would relieve the subject of any difficulty. Is it admissible, or even conceivable that an infinite and uncreated Spirit should be so blended or intermingled with a created spirit or " reasonable soul," as to constitute but *one personality—one essence—one mind—one consciousness—one state of being*, &c. This representation involves, in my view, no less an incongruity than the other. But if Mr. T. will admit of neither of these representations of the complex character of the person of Christ, as stating his belief in relation to the subject, I neither know, nor can I conceive what his belief is. He observes, indeed, that he believes that Jesus Christ, even " *he himself is the man Christ Jesus and the true God.*" But if any of his readers

can understand his meaning, they must possess an acuteness of understanding, to which I never expect to attain.

That Jesus Christ is in scripture styled *man* and *Son of man* is unquestionably true; but does it appear from this consideration, that he *is* "a man, and as *truly so*, as any of Adam's race?" This is by no means to be admitted. The scripture speaks of the angel Gabriel as a man—the angel of the Lord's presence, or the supposed second person in the Trinity, is a man, and God himself, even the supreme Father, is a man, "a man of war." But is it hence to be inferred that either God, or the angel of his presence, or the angel Gabriel, *is a man in the proper sense of the word*, and as truly so, as any of Adam's race? The proper answer to this question is too obvious, not to be perceived. But if Jesus Christ be not properly a man, because he is *spoken of as a man*, and as *the Son of man*, must not every argument employed to prove that this character belongs to him, *be unavailing?*—

But while it is admitted that Jesus Christ is in scripture called man, it will not so readily be admitted that he is called "the true God." Although Mr. T. seems to believe that this title is ascribed to him by an inspired apostle, he has assigned no particular reason for this his belief. Nor can any reason be assigned for it, I am persuaded, which would be satisfactory to the inquisitive and unbiassed mind. That the title, *the true God*, is *not* ascribed to Jesus Christ, but to the *God and Father* of Jesus Christ, has been made to appear highly probable, if not certain, in a tract lately published, entitled, "Things set in a proper light, by an orthodox clergyman." Should the reader be desirous to examine the arguments of that writer in relation to this subject, he will find them in p. 41—43, of the publication referred to.

"Paul, (Mr. T. observes,) expresses my views of the subject, (the supreme divinity of Christ) where, speaking of Israel, he says, "of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever." Although this text seems to convey to the mind of Mr. T. the most full and satisfactory evidence that Jesus Christ is "the supreme Jehovah," yet I cannot but think that were he more carefully to attend to it, the evidence would appear to him less forcible, to say the least, than it now does.

It is very far, I am persuaded, from being certain that St. Paul considered the latter part of this text as descriptive of the character of Christ, or that he ever thought of applying it to him. Is Christ, *as concerning the flesh*, the supreme Jehovah! This I should think could not be the case, even on Trinitarian ground. But be this as it may,

much, if not conclusive evidence, exists, that " the ancient Greek manuscripts had only, *who is over all, blessed forever.* So *Cyprian*, *Hilarius*, and *Chrysostom*, seem to have read it. The *Greek* words, as they stand in the present copies, are of ambiguous construction, and may signify either—*Of whom Christ came ; God who is over all, be blessed forever.* Or, *Of whom Christ came, who is over all : God be blessed forever.* In favour of these renderings, may be alleged the use of the word *blessed* as applied generally to God *the Father*, by way of eminence, in other places of scripture ; and particularly in that remarkable place, " Art thou the Christ, the Son of the *Blessed ?* In favour of these renderings, we have also the testimony of several of the ancient Fathers ; that of *Eusebius* particularly, who in all his books against *Marcellus*, lays it down as the constant known doctrine of the church that Christ is not *the God over all* ; but that this is the *peculiar* title of *the Father.* He also affirms that *Sabellius* was excommunicated as a blasphemer for this very assertion, as confounding the characters of the FATHER and the SON."—But should it be admitted that the rendering, as we have it in the common version of the Bible, is correct, yet, it is far from proving that Jesus Christ is the supreme Jehovah. Is Christ God over all ? Yet is it not " manifest that HE is excepted which did *put* all things under him ?" Christ may be styled God over all, as he is by his God and Father *appointed* Lord, King and Governor of all. " The Father hath *committed* all judgment to the Son—hath *given* all things into his hands, and a name which is above every name that is named, not only in this world ; but also in that which is to come—and has *put* all things (himself excepted) under his feet, and *given* him to be head over all things."—And he is " blessed forever," as he is the object, to men and angels, of everlasting blessing and honour, " to the glory of God the Father." But does it appear from the consideration of these things, that Christ is the supreme and *independent* God ? I humbly conceive that it does not, unless it is to be admitted that a *subordinate* and *dependent* being, has a just claim to *supremacy* and *independence.*

In the view of these things, I cannot but be strongly apprehensive that the sentiments of Mr. T. are as *discordant* with those of " *Paul*," as with those of " Mr. N."

Mr. T. (p. 19.) expresses disapprobation of the terms *middle place* as used in my letter with application to Christ as Mediator between God and men. And with the view to make it appear that Christ neither does, nor can occupy such a place, he observes, " there is but one *infinite* Be-

ing, even the supreme Jehovah. But a *finite* being is *infinitely* inferior to an *infinite* being. For between that which is *limited*, and that which is *unlimited* or *absolutely boundless*, there can be no medium or middle place".— These remarks would be admitted as just, if by *middle place* were meant a place *exactly* mid-way between God and men; but that Mr. T. understood me to use the expression in this sense, is hardly to be supposed. But if he did so understand me, I wish to remove his mistake. I will therefore say, that in speaking of Christ as holding a middle place between God and men, I would be understood as conveying the ideas, that his character is intermediate between that of the supreme God and men, that in this character or station he performs the work of mediation; and that, of course, he can possess neither the character of the supreme God, nor that of man. Precisely to ascertain the nature and dignity of Christ, I make no pretence. Nor, as I conceive, can this ever be ascertained either by men or angels. But that he transcends, and in an inconceivable degree, the highest order of other dependent beings, and that in nature and dignity he is next to the supreme Father, and *thus* holds a middle place, I have expressed as my belief. Nor is my belief in this great and glorious doctrine, in any degree shaken by the remarks which Mr. T. has made respecting it.

To speak of Christ as holding a "a middle place" between God and men is perfectly consistent with my general views of his character, and the character of his Father. Nor does this representation clash, as I conceive, with any Bible statement, or any result of candid and patient investigation. But should this representation be incorrect and unintelligible, as Mr. T. supposes, in what light must he consider it as made by *Trinitarian writers?* Dr. Griffin and other writers on the doctrine of the Trinity, speak of Jesus Christ as "an *agent*, who, *appointed* by the Father, and *subject* to his will, *holds the middle place* of Mediator between God and man" They also speak of him as "the *organ* by which God governs the universe, the *channel* through which all his communications to creatures are made, and the grand *medium* through which he is seen." They also speak of him as "a person that *intervenes* between an offended God and sinful men."

How Trinitarian writers can reconcile these representations of Christ with *their* theory of the Trinity I know not. Nor do I think such a reconciliation possible. In this sentiment Mr. T. seems fully to agree with me; for he says I know not, nor do I ever expect to know what is

meant " by a being who occupies a middle state between God and man ; for between that which is *limited*, and that which is unlimited or *absolutely boundless*, there can be no medium, no middle place"—And that there is indeed no such place for Jesus Christ, if he is " a man, and as *truly so*, as any of Adam's race ;" or if " *he himself is the supreme Jehovah*," is too obvious to require proof. It is undoubtedly a self-evident proposition that neither the supreme God, nor a man, can hold a *middle place between the supreme God and man.* But is it not equally evident according to Mr. T's " views upon the subject," that Jesus Christ does not hold the place or state even of *Mediator* between God and men ? As " the *supreme Jehovah*" he cannot surely occupy this place or state, and it is equally impossible that he should do this, as " *truly a man.*" Nor is it possible that the supposed *person* of Christ who " is truly a man, and the supreme Jehovah," can occupy the place or state of Mediator, unless this *same person* can perform the work of mediation between *himself* and *men !* for surely there is but one supreme Jehovah. But this same supreme Jehovah, according to Mr. T's theory, is a *constituent part* of the person of Christ ! According to this theory, I can find neither a middle place, nor any *other place* for Christ as Mediator, unless it be that, which may be occupied by " a man, as *truly so* as any of Adam's race !"—But this is not " the man Christ Jesus" whom I consider as the Mediator, and as holding a middle place between God and men. In my estimation he is a person or being of inconceivably higher character, dignity and excellence. Nor can I admit that the supreme Jehovah occupies such a place ; nor that the supreme Jehovah, *so* united to a man, as to become *one person* with him, performs the work of mediation. That such a person should *exist*, appears to me impossible ; nor, as I conceive, has the existence of such a person the sanction either of *enlightened reason or revelation.* But were the existence of such a person possible, and even admitted as fact, is it conceivable that he could sustain and execute the office of Mediator between himself and man ! This, I humbly conceive, would be impossible. And I know not but it is impossible to reconcile, in any degree, Mr. T's. views of the person of Christ with mine.—If this really be the case, I cannot but deeply regret it, as, I must view him a much greater errorist, than I have heretofore done.

" I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God—his only begotten Son—the first born of every creature—that God sanctified and sent him into the world as Mediator

between himself and sinful men, and therefore, that he is not a Mediator of one, or of one party concerned—that as a prophet God raised him up—that he is the high priest of our profession, and is faithful to him who appointed him—that he is the King, whom God has set on his holy hill of Zion—that he will reign in his kingdom till he hath put all enemies under his feet, when he will deliver up the kingdom, which he had received, to God, even the Father, that God may be *all in all.* I believe also that the doctrine which he taught was not his own, but the doctrine of him that sent him—that he spoke the words of God who gave not the Spirit by measure unto him—that he received commandment of his Father, prayed to, and obeyed his Father—that of his ownself he could do nothing, and that he sought not his own will, but the will of the Father who sent him.—I furthermore believe that all power was given him in heaven and in earth—insomuch that he could not only lay down that life which his Father gave him, but take it again; and that he was fully competent to do whatever was in his commission—that although he knew what was in man, and searched the hearts of mankind, yet that he knew not the day of judgment—that, nevertheless, he was ordained of God to judge the quick and the dead, and that God, by him, will hereafter judge the secrets of all men, according to the gospel. In fine, I believe that when he had done and suffered the whole will of God, he died on the cross, making complete atonement for the sins of his people, and that in consequence of this, God has highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord *to the glory of God the Father.*"

These, are among the things which I believe concerning Jesus Christ, as a person or being distinct from the one God, his Father; which things I cannot believe to be true with respect to this one God. And these are the things which I have exhibited as articles of my belief in my letter addressed to Mr. T. and which he says are *totally opposite* to *his sentiments!*—Most devoutly do I hope that in saying this, he has not expressed what he designed. But if he has done it, most sincerely do I lament his incredulity.

On the page of Mr. T's. letter, from which I made the last quotation, he has thrown together several mutilated and disjointed passages from my publication, which I consider as calculated to make a very improper impression on the minds of his readers, and to place me in a very

unfavourable, if not a ludicrous point of light, as a writer. "On these things, found in different parts of Mr. N's. wonderful production, and which so wonderfully 'harmonize,' he forbears to comment. They are here thrown together and presented in one view to his readers, that they may consider them well, and make their own reflections." As I am no less desirous than Mr. T. that his readers should consider "these things *well*," it is my hope that they will avail themselves of the proper means of doing it, by reading them attentively in their *original form and connexion*. Unless they do this, they may be assured that it will not be in their power to consider "*well*" what I have written, nor to "make their own reflections," in a manner, either to *do justice to Mr. T. or myself*.

REVIEW OF TRINITARIAN WRITERS.

In pages 20 and 21, Mr. Thomas observes, "This very consistent writer, (Mr. N.) has laboured through thirty pages, in reviewing 'the sentiments of several of the most celebrated modern writers in relation to the doctrine of the Trinity, and particularly in relation to the character of Jesus Christ,' with the professed design to expose the clashings of their several theories, &c."—On this he says, "whatever clashings he may have discovered among those authors, he has utterly failed to prove, either that they are disagreed with respect to the essentials of Trinitarianism, or that their scheme is absurd, unreasonable or unscriptural."—Here Mr. T. seems to admit that I *have* discovered "clashings" among those authors. But they are not so great, in his estimation, as to affect the essentials of Trinitarianism. And this I will readily admit as true, if that theory is consistent with believing that Jesus Christ *is* the supreme Jehovah, and that the very same Jesus Christ is *not* the supreme Jehovah. But if to believe a proposition *is true*, with respect to Jesus Christ, and that the same proposition is *not true*, is inconsistent with the essentials of Trinitarianism, I have shown, I think, that all the theories of the writers above referred to, cannot be consistent with the essentials of the Trinitarian doctrine. But if I have not successfully done this, why has not Mr. T. exposed the failure of my attempt?

If practicable, and had he shewn that the *seeming* contradictions of those writers are *not real*, and that they are all consistent with the doctrine of the Trinity, he would have conferred upon me a great obligation; as, in this case, I might learn what is the *latitude* of that doc-

trine, and find among its professors, those, whom I had considered as denying its essentials.

Is it not essential to the doctrine of the Trinity, that God exists in three distinct persons or agents, equal in power and glory? Is it not essential also to this doctrine, that Jesus Christ, in what is called his lowest character, is truly a man; and that in this character he began to exist in the reign of Cesar Augustus? But how many are there, at the present day, denominated and acknowledged as Trinitarians, who deny the supposed truth of these Trinitarian doctrines? Since then, the *assumption* of the Trinitarian name seems to give currency to almost any sentiments, as consistent with the essentials of the Trinitarian doctrine, may it not reasonably be expected that the *substance* not being insisted on, the *shadow* will not for a long time, be considered as a test of orthodoxy, or required as a term of christian communion? In the hope and *expectation* of this, I dismiss this strange and *multiform* subject, and turn my attention to several

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES,

On which Mr. Thomas seems to place much dependence as furnishing proof of the doctrine of the Trinity, and of the supreme Deity of Christ. The first text which he quotes, (p. 21,) in proof of the doctrine of the Trinity is—"There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one," 1 John v. 7.—"These, (observes Mr. T.) are propositions that ought to be believed upon the divine declaration, although there is that contained in them, which it is impossible to explain, and which it would be presumptuous to *attempt* to explain."—As the declaration of Mr. T. with respect to "these propositions," is but *human*, it is not to be admitted as unquestionably true. And that it is entitled to little or no credence, is the belief of many eminently learned and pious men. If *their* belief with respect to the propositions in question be correct, these propositions are *not* to be believed "upon *divine* declaration," as divine declaration does not support them. It is the belief of these men, that the propositions contained in the text are *not genuine* scripture, but an *unwarranted interpolation.* In support of this their belief, they produce a mass of evidence, which they consider as amounting to demonstration. And this evidence is so satisfactory, that some of the most learned of *Trinitarian* christians, who have paid the most careful attention to the subject, reject the text containing the prop-

ositions, as *spurious*. Nor do they hesitate to say, "*We are unspeakably ashamed that any modern divines should have contended for retaining a passage so indisputably spurious.*"—Although I am not prepared to use this strength of expression, yet I cannot but think it very disingenuous in Trinitarian writers to quote the text in proof of the doctrine of the Trinity, without so much as *intimating* that its genuineness, is, at least, *very doubtful.*

But were the text to be admitted as having been given by the inspiration of God, yet of what avail is it in favour of the doctrine of the Trinity? In what sense are the "*three one*," but that of *consent of testimony*? or that they all agree in bearing the *same* testimony? for it is of a record or testimony, of which John is here speaking. The plain and obvious import of the passage seems to be, *The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit bear testimony of Christ*, as if they were *one witness*, so perfectly do they harmonize in bearing witness to him. Thus Beza interprets the text, *These three are one in consent.* And Calvin says, in that, *These three are one*, the apostle refers not to their essence, but rather to their *consent.*—Admiting the text to be genuine, this, I think, ought to be admitted as its genuine commentary. Nor do I think it "presumptuous" *thus* to explain it. But if there is *that* contained in it, "which it is impossible to explain, and which it would be presumptuous to *attempt* to explain," as Mr. T. supposes, I see not with what propriety he can attempt *so* to explain, as to find in it a "*Triune God.*" Thus to explain the text, may well be considered as *highly* presumptuous.

The next passages quoted by Mr. T. on which he relies as evidence in support of the doctrine of the Trinity, are the following—"Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness, Gen. i. 26.—the man is become as *one* of *us*, to know good and evil." Gen. iii. 22. In these texts, Mr. T. observes "that God clearly intimated that there is in himself a plurality of persons. And this idea, whatever Anti-trinitarians may pretend to the contrary, is certainly strengthened by the fact, 'that the word Elohim, in Hebrew, translated God, is in the plural;' and that a number of other words, repeatedly used with application to him, are also in the plural number, as found in the original."—In relation to the above quoted texts, I have to observe, that if they intimate that there is a *plurality* of persons *in God*, yet we cannot learn from them the *exact number*, whether it be *three*, or *more*, or *less*. But should it be admitted that the number is to be limited to *three;* yet, can it reasonably be urged that this plurality of *persons*

exist *in*, or constitute *one God?* Were Mr. T. to hear a painter or statuary say to his two sons, " let us make a portrait or statue in *our* image, after *our* likeness," would he infer, or be likely to believe that the father and his sons constituted *one man*, or that there was a *plurality of persons in the father ?* But do not the pronouns *our* and *us*, in the above quoted text, intimate that the speaker addressed a person or persons,—a being, or beings, as *distinct* from his *own person or being*, as the supposed sons of the painter or statuary are *distinct* from *himself?*—The probability however, is, that God spake to but *one* other person, and that this person was *his Son*, *by* or *through* whom he made the worlds, and all things visible and invisible. But do the texts intimate that this *other* person or being, is *one and the same being with the Speaker ?*

As to the evidence which the " word Elohim" is supposed to afford of a " plurality of persons" in one God, I must believe that it is exceedingly feeble and precarious.

Although the word is, in its form, plural, yet Trinitarian writers who are criticks in the Hebrew language, admit that it sometimes is not of plural signification, but " is used in reference to *one*, as in Psalm xlv. 7. Hosea i. 7, and xii. 3. It is also to be observed, that it is generally, and I believe *always* rendered in the Septuagint, *Theos*, which word is singular both in form and import.

For the information of such of my readers as are not acquainted with the subject, the following brief account is submitted to their consideration :

" The *Septuagint* is the name given to a Greek version of the books of the Old Testament, from its being supposed to be the work of seventy-two Jews, who are usually called the seventy interpreters, because seventy is a round number. Ptolemy Physion, Philo, and Josephus, speak of this translation as made by seventy-two interpreters, by the care of Demetrius, Phalerus, in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, about 240 years before Christ. All the christian writers during the first fifteen centuries of the christian era, have admitted this account of the Septuagint as undoubted fact. This is the version, and this *only*, which is constantly used and quoted in the gospels, and by the apostles, and which has thereby received the highest sanction which any writings can possibly receive."

Now, since the Old Testament scriptures were translated into the Greek language, by so great a number of Jews who may reasonably be supposed to have been the most distinguished for their learning and integrity, must it not be admitted, that the translation is as correct, as human learning and uprightness could reasonably promise *?*

Did not these learned translators *understand* the import and force of their *own language*, as *well*, and indeed *much better* than *smatterers*, or even the *greatest proficients* in that language among us? Were they not *competent* to the faithful discharge of their important trust? Or could they have been under *any temptation* to perform this work *unfaithfully?* Had their translation been dangerously, or in any considerable degree incorrect, it cannot reasonably be supposed that our Saviour and his apostles would have constantly used and quoted it. If then the word Elohim imports plurality of persons in God, how is it to be accounted for that the translators, *native Jews*, and *seventy-two* in number, should, in translating it, always use the word *Theos*, which answers to the Latin word *Deus*, and the English word *God*, and is singular both in form and construction? If this rendering were incorrect, and especially if the incorrectness were such as to involve a dangerous and destructive doctrine, would not Jesus Christ, instead of giving it practical approbation, have pointed out the error, guarded his disciples and followers against it, and *unequivocally condemned it!*

These things, it should seem, need but to be stated to convince every candid and attentive mind, that the word Elohim, so far from establishing the doctrine of the Trinity, furnishes strong, if not conclusive evidence, that God is *simply One*,—one in essence, in person, in being. And this is the doctrine, which the Jews have generally, if not universally, in all periods, considered as contained not only in the word *Elohim*, but in all their *sacred books*.

Not only, "is the word Elohim, (Mr. T. observes,) in the plural," but "a number of other words with application to God." This is readily admitted. But what is to be inferred from this circumstance? Mr. T. supposes the existence of three equal persons in one God. But why not the existence of *three equal Gods?* This inference, it might be urged, is *quite* as natural as the other. But neither of them, it is believed, ought to be admitted as correct. The truth is, that these same words are almost invariably used in the singular number, and are of singular import. Should the circumstance then, that in a few instances they have the plural form, seem to afford *some evidence* in favour of a plurality of persons in God, yet does not the circumstance that they are almost uniformly of the singular number, furnish *overbalancing*, if *not demonstrative evidence*, that God is but *one person*.

In this connexion I would briefly observe, that the word *Jehovah* is considered by Trinitarian writers as *peculiar* to God, and as expressive of his incommunicable perfec-

tions. And because it is applied to Christ, they infer that he is the self-existent God? But when it is considered that this same word is rendered *Kurios* in the Septuagint, which in Latin is *Dominus*, and in English *Lord*, and is applied to *men*, must not the Trinitarian argument be very far from conclusive, or even forcible?

"Should it be asked, (says Mr. T. p. 22) what evidence there is, that these three, (the Father, Son and Spirit) are truly divine, and yet are *one* God? I answer, that the Bible, in ascribing divine titles, divine perfections, divine works, and divine honours to each, does declare that each possesses real divinity, or that it is proper to call each of them God; and yet the same Bible asserts that there is but *one* God, but *one* supreme Jehovah." As I have already anticipated this argument in what I have said respecting the Holy Spirit, and the dependence of Jesus Christ on his Father, I shall say but little in this place in reply to it.

Were it a fact, as Mr. T. seems to suppose, that the Bible ascribes to Christ *underived* and *independent* titles, perfections and works, and *supreme* divine honours, it might be so far to his purpose as to prove that Christ is the supreme and independent God. But *does* the Bible ascribe *these titles*, &c. and *this honour* to Jesus Christ? That it does *not*, cannot, I should think, reasonably be questioned. And as I have already given my principal reasons for this my belief, I shall add nothing more at present in support of it, and especially as Mr. T's. *assumption* is accompanied with *neither evidence nor reasonable argument*. If Mr. T. means to be understood as saying that the Bible asserts of the Father, Son and Spirit, that each is the supreme God, as I suppose he does, I do not see but it necessarily follows that these three are *three supreme Gods*. But can *three* supreme Gods, be but *one* supreme God? This Mr. T. will, I presume, deny as an utter impossibility. But is it not equally impossible that three distinct *persons or agents*, to each of whom belong all possible and infinite perfections, should constitute but one *supreme God*, and indeed, that they *should exist?* If not, I wish to see some reason assigned for it. Besides, as the supreme God, according to the Trinitarian theory, consists of *three persons* equal in power and glory, and as *each* of these persons is *the supreme God*, must there not be *nine equal persons?* In saying this, I am far from experiencing any emotion of levity, or of a ludicrous nature. Seldom has my mind been in a more serious and solemn frame. But the above suggestion was made to shew the extravagant consequences to

which the doctrine I oppose, seems to lead. I pray God that it may have the designed effect.

In page 23, Mr. T. inquires what I mean, where I say of Christ "that he is neither the one God, nor a man, but a real and proper person or being, who holds a middle place between both." As I have in the preceding part of this work expressed my views of this subject, I shall add nothing more than to express what I think myself warranted to believe with respect to the question, whether "Christ is a creature?" This question I have no desire to evade; but as it is very ambiguous, I know not whether I shall be able satisfactorily to answer it. *What is a creature*? Our globe is a creature, which was produced from nothing—the corporal part of Adam was a creature, although formed of pre-existent materials—the body of Eve was a creature, which was formed from a constituent part of Adam—man, as consisting of body and soul, is a creature, and he is a *new* creature when renovated by the Spirit of God. In how many senses the word *creature* is to be understood I know not; nor can I either know or conceive how many, and various are the *modes* of creation, or what is the *nature* of any mode. But if by "creature" be meant a *produced* and *dependent* being, then I should say, in answer to the question, that I consider Christ as a creature. But whether he were produced from *nothing*, or from *something*, I presume not to say. This subject I acknowledge as a mystery, which to my mind is utterly incomprehensible. To say however with Mr. T. that he is a man or a *creature*, and as "*truly so*, as any of *Adam's race*," I may not—*I dare not*. This declaration I consider as exceedingly degrading to the character of Christ, who was in the beginning with God, and who is styled God. Nor should I dare say this with respect to any supposed "lowest character" of Christ. Such a character, the Bible, as I conceive, never ascribes to him. As *man* he is God's *fellow*. But otherwise than this, he neither is, as I conceive, nor ever was, a man.

Mr. Thomas proceeds to ask what we are to understand by several passages of scripture, which he seems to consider as affording proof of the deity of Christ. To these I shall briefly attend in the order in which they are placed.

"*The mighty God and everlasting Father*," Isa. ix. 6. That these titles are applied to Christ will readily be admitted, and as worthy of "all acceptation." But does this their application prove that Christ is the supreme Jehovah, or the independent God? If so, it proves, it

should seem, that the *Supreme and independent God* was once a "*child*"—was "*born*"—was a "*Son*," and was "*given*" to die for a guilty world! But *thus* to represent or speak of the unchangeable God seems to me to be highly improper and irreverent.

Although Jesus Christ is "called," or denominated *Mighty* and *God*; or as we have it in our common version, "mighty God," yet is not this title *given* him? The general import and fitness of this title, as applied to the Messiah, we may learn from many passages in the New Testament, and particularly where we read, "God has given him a name, which is above every name," that every creature should submit to his authority, "*to the glory of God the Father.*" And notwithstanding Christ is "called" *the everlasting Father*, yet it is to be remembered that the *supreme God* is *his Father*. By the terms "everlasting Father," we are to understand, I am persuaded, the Father or Lord of *the everlasting age*, that age or dispensation which is to continue to the *end of time*, the *age of the gospel;* concerning which the apostle observes, that to *Christ only*, and not to angels, God hath *put in subjection* this *age to come.*

"*Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*" Mic. v. 2. This description, it is admitted also, is applied to Christ or the Messiah, whose going forth did not commence with his birth from the womb of the virgin, but took place from *everlasting*, of *old*, from the *beginning*, or "*ever the earth was.*" Christ, the Son of God, was from "everlasting," as he was "*brought forth*" by his Father, or existed, *when* there were neither "*depths* nor *hills.*"

"*God was manifest in the flesh.*" 1 Tim. iii. 16. There is much reason to believe that this is not the ancient and true reading. By some it is thought that the passage should be read, *He that* was manifest, viz. he who is called *God* in the beginning of St. John's gospel. And does not the declaration of the faithful and true Witness, that *his Father is the only true God*, seem to favour this belief? This *only true God*, the *Father*, is never said to be *manifest in the flesh.* But should it be admitted that he was manifest in the flesh, may it not reasonably be supposed the import of the expression is, that the Father "was *in* Christ," "*dwelt* in him," and *by* or *through* him manifested his "name," his power and glory? But should it be urged that the *supreme God* was manifest in the flesh, by being "*made* flesh" by union to a human body, what then I would ask can be intended, by his having been "justified in the Spirit," and "received up into

glory?" Did the supreme God ever leave the mansions of glory, become incarnate, suffer and die! And after this, was he received from this lower world up into glory? By *whom* was he *received? How can these things be!*

"*The great God, and our Saviour.*" Tit. ii. 13.—The whole verse of which these words are a part, reads thus in the common version; "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ." The literal translation of the Greek is, *And the appearing of the glory of the great God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ.* Nor will Mr. T. or any man acquainted with the Greek language, object to this rendering as strictly literal and correct. What then is the obvious import of the passage but this—Our Saviour Jesus Christ will, at the consummation of time, appear in *his own*, and attended by his *Father's glory!* By the *great God*, therefore, must necessarily be understood, as it appears to me, the one God, even the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, "who is over all and above all." The title, *the great God*, is never in scripture applied to any other person or being, but to the *supreme Father.*

"*The First and the Last.*" Rev. xxii. 13. Jesus Christ is the beginning of the creation of God—the first born of every creature. No person or being of his rank and office ever existed before him, or will ever exist in future time, or in eternity. Of Christ it may be truly said, that he is *the first and the last*, as he never had a *predecessor*, and will never have a *successor* like him in *character* and *office.*

"*The same yesterday, to-day and forever.*" Heb. xiii. 8. Does the term *yesterday* import the *eternity* of Christ's existence? or do the terms *to-day* and *forever*, import that he is the *supreme Jehovah!*

The apostle in this passage speaks of Christ as the object of the christian's faith at that time, as he had been the object of faith to other christians who were then dead; and as the object of faith to christians to the end of the world. This object of faith is the *same* Saviour, the *same* Jesus Christ *now*, as he *always has been*, and he will *always remain the same.*

"*The true God.*" 1 John v. 20. This title is, by the apostle, applied to *God the Father.* That the reader may be satisfied that this is the case, he has already been referred to a late publication, entitled "Things set in a proper light, &c."

"*The Almighty.*" Rev. i. 8. That this title also is applied to God the Father, we have much reason to believe. But should it be applied to Jesus Christ, yet the

all power which he possesses is a *derived* power, if his own declaration is to be credited. "Jesus came and spake unto them, (his disciples) saying, all power is *given* unto me in heaven and in earth."

"*Over all, God blessed forever.*" Rom. ix. 5. To this passage I have already particularly attended.

"*Before Abraham was, I am.*" John viii. 58. To understand the import of *I am*, the context is to be consulted. "Your father Abraham, (said Christ to the Jews with whom he was conversing,) rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, thou art not fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" To this question, "Jesus said unto them, verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am," or *I was*. I existed before the birth of Abraham. This seems to be the plain and obvious import of the terms. And thus the Jews appear to have understood them; for believing, as they did, that he had not existed *half a century*, "they took up stones to cast at him," as a man who had uttered an egregious falsehood. Or the meaning may be, that Christ was *superior to Abraham*.

Mr. T. observes, that Christ in saying, "Before Abraham was, *I am*," assumed the very name by which the God of Israel made himself known to Moses, and which all agree is descriptive of a self-existent being." But this assertion is *not founded on fact*, if the Septuagint translation of the text is correct. And that it is correct, will hardly admit of doubt, when it is considered that Christ and his apostles gave their united testimony to that version of the Jewish scriptures as correct, by always quoting from it.

Christ "*thought it not robbery to be equal with God.*" Phil. ii. 6. This text seems to be considered by Mr. T. and others as furnishing unequivocal evidence that Jesus Christ is the supreme and independent Jehovah. But that it *really* does so, ought not hastily to be admitted. Is it certain that the text, as we find it in the common version, is correct? It is thought by men of the deepest erudition, as well *Trinitarians* as Antitrinitarians, that this is very far from being the case. But should the translation be considered as unquestionably correct, yet does the word *equal* import *strict equality*; or that Christ, the Son of God, is equal to his Father in power and glory, and in all respects! Should this be admitted, must not the existence of *two equal Gods* be also admitted! If there is a God, and another who is equal to him in nature, perfections and authority, the latter, so far as I can see, must be as truly a God, in the highest sense, as the former. Nor,

as I conceive, can this inference be evaded, by the pretence that they are not *two Gods*, but that they are *one being*, and therefore but *one God*. To reason in this way, is no more satisfactory than to say, that a *being is equal to himself, or itself*.

But if Jesus Christ be equal, in the strict sense of the word, to God his Father, and it yet be denied that there are *two* supreme Gods, then it must be admitted that Jesus Christ is the *one* supreme God. And that he really is so, is the belief of Mr. T. But according to his belief must not the text be read thus—"The *supreme God*, being in the *form* of the *supreme God*, thought it not robbery to be *equal to himself*!" Besides, must not this be the construction of the subsequent context—"The supreme God made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore the supreme God also hath highly exalted the supreme God, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of the supreme God every knee should bow, and that every tongue should confess that the supreme God is Lord, to the glory of the supreme God, even the *Father* of the *supreme God!*"

Who but must revolt at a construction, incongruous and shocking like this! But such, I conceive, must be the construction of the text under consideration, and its context, should it be admitted that Christ is the supreme God, or equal to the supreme God, the Father. Should Mr. T. however, object to this construction as strained and unjust, I am unable, I confess, to discover any valid ground for his objection. Nor do I see but he must of *necessity* admit, that if Jesus Christ is the supreme God, this same supreme God was *made* in the likeness of men, that he was *obedient—died* on the *cross*, was by God *highly exalted*—had a name *given* him by God—and that this *supreme God* is to be reverenced to the glory of *God his Father!* If Mr. T. will not admit all this, as perfectly accordant with his views of the character of Christ, I would suggest whether, in order to be consistent with himself and with the truth, as contained in the passage in question, he must not consider the passage viewed in connexion with the context as importing—that "Christ, who being, or having been in the form or likeness of God, *was not eager in retaining that form or likeness to God;* but that on the contrary he humbled, or emptied himself, &c." Although I would not peremptorily assert that this is the

just import of the text, yet I think it highly probable that it is.

Page 24, Mr. T. asks, "If Christ is no more than a *creature*, how is it that all the angels of God are required to worship him, and that all men are required to 'honour the Son even as they honour the Father,' the supreme Jehovah?"—To this I reply,—All the angels of God are required to worship, or be subject to Christ, not as the supreme Jehovah, but as "the *first begotten*" of the supreme Jehovah. All men are required to honour the Son *even as* they honour the Father, because the Father "hath *committed* all judgment to the Son; and hath *given* him authority to execute judgment also." But can we consistently give precisely the same honour to a dependent person or being, as to that being on whom he depends for "judgment" and "authority" to execute it! Or can we give precisely the same honour to two independent persons or beings without incurring the guilt of idolatry? We may indeed honour the Son as God's messenger and representative. This we are required to do. And in doing it we honour both the Son and the Father. But "he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which *sent* him."

Same page Mr. T. observes, that "the same God who commands them (creatures) to worship Christ, forbids their worshipping *any* being but himself." Hence he seems to infer that Christ is the supreme Jehovah. This kind of reasoning, while it may appear specious, and be even conclusive to those who are in the habit of receiving *assertion* for *argument*, can have no weight, I should think, with the well-informed and attentive mind.—It is a well known fact to all who have attended to the subject, that the Greek word, which is translated *to worship*, imports a *bending of the body*, or a *prostration of it to the earth*, in token of respect and honour. It is used promiscuously in scripture, to signify both divine worship, and the honour paid to distinguished personages. Agreeably we read, "All the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and *worshipped* the *Lord* and the *king*." From this it is plain that the word *worship*, does not exclusively signify supreme homage, or that homage which is due to God alone. Is it true, then, that God *forbids* us, as Mr. T. says he does, to worship, or respect, or honour, *any* being but himself? Were the congregation of Israel *forbidden* to worship or honour their king? Instead of *forbidding*, God as explicitly *requires* his creatures to honour or *worship the king*, and *those* who are *their parents*, as he does to honour or *worship his Son*. The truth is, that God requires us

to worship or honour *himself alone* as the *only supreme God*—to worship or honour Jesus Christ as his *Son or first begotten*, and to worship or honour other persons, according to *their worth and rank respectively*.

"*By him* (Christ) *were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him: and he is before all things; and by him all things consist.*" Col. i. 16, 17. The design of the apostle, here, seems to be to prove that Jesus Christ is neither a man, nor yet the supreme Jehovah. In the two verses immediately preceding this passage, he says, that "we have redemption through his blood (the blood of Christ) even the forgiveness of our sins,"—that "he is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature." This representation cannot agree with the character of any *mere man*, unless a mere man is the *first born of every creature*, which will not, I would presume, be pretended. Nor can this representation be considered as descriptive of the character of the *self-existent Jehovah*, unless the self-existent Jehovah may be considered as having *shed his own blood* for the remission of sins, and as having been the *image of himself!* Yet by this same Jesus Christ "were all things created," all the various ranks of men and angels—the visible and invisible thrones, dominions, principalities and powers, that are in heaven and in earth. All these things were created *by* Jesus Christ, as the *agent* of his Father, "by whom he made the worlds." In perfect accordance with this view of the subject, we read, "To us there is but *one God*, the *Father*, *of* whom are all things, and *one Lord Jesus Christ*, *by* whom are all things." And as all things were created by him as his Father's agent, and by power received from his Father, so they were made also *for him*—to be in subjection to him—"that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." He must of course then have *been before* the all things which were created by him and for him. *And by him all things consist.* As God made all things by him, so also he upholds and preserves all things by him. Agreeably, Christ is said to "uphold all things by the word of *his* power," the power of God the Father, communicated to him.

But notwithstanding God made all things *by* and *for* Jesus Christ, to be in subjection to him, yet it is always to be understood that all things were derived from God as the *primary and supreme cause*, and that he is the *only independent possessor and governor* of all things. For, although "all things are put under him, (Christ,) it is

manifest that HE is excepted, which did put all things under him."

"*And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, blessing and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.*" Rev. v. 13. Mr. T. if I understand him, endeavours to prove that every creature *without exception* "joins in this universal song of praise to the Lamb." But if in this he has succeeded, it may be thought, and not without reason, that every rational creature, without exception, will be the subject of *effectual and saving* redemption through the blood of the Lamb that was slain. But to this sentiment I am not prepared to accord my assent.

How extensively this song of praise "unto him that sitteth on the throne and unto the Lamb," is to be considered, I presume not to say. But that holy and happy beings, both angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, unite, and always will unite in this song, I fully believe; yet I cannot find evidence that the praise which they ascribe to the *Lamb* is precisely the same, as they ascribe to *him who sitteth upon the throne*: or that the praise which they ascribe to *both*, is ascribed to *one* and the *same being*. Is the appellation *Lamb* ever applied to the *one God*, the *Father?* Was this one God ever *slain*, as was the Lamb? Or is this "*Lamb* of God" the same being as *God himself*! How then is the praise which is ascribed to *him*, the praise which is ascribed to the *supreme Jehovah* who sitteth upon the throne *?*

Observing the order of things as I find them in Mr. T's. letter, I shall now give a cursory attention to several

MISCELLANEOUS ARTICLES.

Page 25, Mr. Thomas has introduced several "passages of scripture, chiefly for the purpose of inquiring whether Mr. N's. views of the *Holy Spirit* accord with them." The passages quoted are,—"When he (the Comforter, the Holy Spirit) is come, he will reprove the world of sin." "When he, the Spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak." Several other passages of like import are in the list of quotations.

Were there no other passages in the inspired volume, than these, to assist us in determining the true character of the Holy Spirit, we might, and probably should be led to

consider the Spirit as a person distinct from any other person or being. But that this Spirit is a person, and *equal* to the one God, these passages would not be likely, I think, to teach us. It is to be remembered that Christ, a little previous to his crucifixion, for the encouragement and support of his disciples, observed to them that he would pray the Father, and he would give them another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth; and promised them that the Father would send them this Comforter, who should teach them all things. And this same Comforter he speaks of as proceeding from the Father. Here, and in the above quoted passages, the Spirit seems to be represented as *subject* to the will of the Father—as the *gift* of the Father, as *sent* by the Father, as *proceeding* from the Father, as speaking what he should *hear*, or by the instruction of the Father. Now, on the supposition that the Holy Spirit is a *distinct person*, does it not appear from this representation that he is *not equal* to the Father? A dependent person surely cannot be an independent person, or equal to him, on whom he depends. Does not the doctrine then of three equal persons in one God appear, from this single consideration, to be destitute of support? But is it necessary, I would ask, that we consider the Holy Spirit as a distinct person from the Father, either of *equal* or *unequal rank?* Rather have we not much reason to believe that the Spirit is a person *only* in an improper, or figurative sense, or possesses a *personified* character? Conformably to eastern custom we find many inanimate, as well as the brutal parts of creation personified, or represented as persons. The sun *rejoices* and *runs his race;* the moon is a *faithful witness* in heaven, and the stars in their courses *fought* against Sisera. All the heavenly bodies *praise* God. The fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field, from the mighty elephant, down to the little ant, *teach* mankind important truths; the fishes of the sea *declare* the glory of God; trees *talk*, and *choose a king*, and even "the thistle, we find, *sending* to the cedar of Lebanon, *saying*, give me thy daughter to my son to wife." In short, almost every part of creation is represented under the notion of a person as possessing human powers, and performing human actions. Is it then incredible that the Holy Spirit, although not a proper person, should be *personified* under *another appellation*? That the Spirit is indeed thus personified in the above quoted passages, will, I think, appear highly probable, if not absolutely certain, when we consider the *manner* in which Christ's promise of the Comforter or Holy Spirit was *fulfilled.*

Was not this promise fulfilled, when the disciples of Christ were "endued with *power* from on high"—when they were "*baptized with the Holy Ghost*"—when the "Holy Ghost *came upon them*"—and when the Holy Ghost was "*shed forth?*" But can it reasonably be supposed that these are proper terms by which to designate the Holy Spirit as a *proper person!* Now, as the Spirit is more strikingly personified under the name of Comforter, than under any other, and as this personification furnishes little or no evidence that the Spirit is a proper and distinct person, may we not with much confidence believe, that the personality of the Spirit is but *figurative?*

Yet Mr. T. has unblushingly treated the subject, as it appears to me, in a very irreverent, and even ludicrous manner, insinuating that my views of the Holy Spirit justify the following, and similar statements: "When the *breath* of God is come, *he* will *reprove* the world of sin. The *breath* of God shall not *speak of himself*; but whatsoever *he* shall *hear*, that shall *he speak*. The THING *said separate* ME Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto *I* have *called* them."—It is with much sorrow and deep concern, that I discover that irreverence of the Holy Scriptures, and the Great Inspirer of them, which the above quotations seem to indicate. These quotations as they respect myself, give me little or no disquietude; but as they respect the revelation and the Spirit of God, they excite in my breast very painful sensations, and shock me almost with horror. Most sincerely do I hope that Mr. T's. treatment of the subject was owing to excuseable inadvertence. Indeed I cannot but believe, had he duly considered, that the person who is "called the Son of God," and whom he acknowledges as the supreme Jehovah, is "that holy THING," which was born of the Virgin, he would not in so wanton a manner have condemned the guiltless, and treated with such irreverence the holy book of God. I pray God that this sin may not be laid to his charge, and that the admonition which it has occasioned, may be available to salutary correction.

In pages 26, 27, Mr. T. endeavours to prove, if I understand him, that my "theory undermines, and destroys the whole work of redemption," as it is incompatible with the doctrine of "an atonement." His proof of this arises from my denial "of the real divinity and the real humanity of Christ" and the "personality of the Holy Ghost." This denial he expressly says, "completely overthrows the atonement," and then observes, "If the work of redemption is overthrown, what but inevitable destruction and perdition, awaits a sinful ruined world!"

That Mr. T. in these remarks, very strongly insinuates, that my views of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are inconsistent with that belief of the gospel which is necessary to salvation, and even a title to the christian name, is too evident to admit of doubt. In thus denouncing me as an infidel and a reprobate, his denunciation falls not only upon a large portion of professing christians, but upon many christian ministers, who, judging from their habitual conduct, are eminently the meek and humble followers of the Lamb; and who, it is presumed, have with as much diligence, impartiality, and prayerful attention, examined the scriptures, that they might know and embrace the truth in relation to the Son, and Spirit of God, as Mr. T. can be supposed to have done. Whether in thus judging and condemning his brethren, he has exercised the spirit of Christ, is a question, which it becomes him very seriously to consider.

It is indeed "a small thing to be judged of man's judgment." Thus to be judged gives me little or no concern. I cannot, however, but feel much concern for those, who, as it appears to me, very unreasonably, rashly, and presumptuously, judge and condemn their brethren as infidels; as overthrowing the work of redemption, and as doomed to inevitable destruction and perdition, because they cannot assent to propositions which they cannot understand, and which these their judges have been able neither to explain nor substantiate.

However incorrect my sentiments may be, Mr. T. cannot be ignorant that I have explicitly declared my belief in the doctrine of the atonement as effected by the obedience, sufferings and death of the Son of God, whom I acknowledge as the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person; and whom I consider as unspeakably, inconceivably more excellent, dignified and glorious than any human or angelic being. Nor is he ignorant that I consider the Holy Spirit as *eternal*—as included in the *self-existence* of the one God, and as denoting his *fulness*, or *all-sufficiency*. Yet in the estimation of Mr. T. this my belief *completely* overthrows the atonement, and leads to inevitable perdition!

I cannot but hope that a careful review of the subject will convince this gentleman that he has too hastily and very improperly decided upon it. But should his decision be correct, will it not equally, to say the *least*, affect his own hypothesis, agreeably to which, "it was necessary, that he who was to make the atonement, should *die* to make it." "The necessity of this, (Mr. T. observes,) appears from the fact, that he *did* lay down his life. Yet it was

impossible that divinity should suffer and die." This is Mr. T's. view of the subject. But as "divinity could not suffer and die," *he* who *did lay down his life*, must, according to this hypothesis, have been a mere creature, and "as *truly so* as any of Adam's race." This conclusion, I am persuaded, admits of no evasion. Here, then, we find the doctrine of the atonement founded on the sufferings and death of a *mere man!* And this doctrine *must be believed*, or "inevitable destruction and perdition, awaits" the *infidel*. And here we find "clearly expressed God's infinite abhorrence of sin!"

To elude the force, and as I believe, the correctness of this representation, Mr. T. has recourse to the "complex character" of Christ. As "it was impossible that divinity should suffer and die," he infers "the necessity of Christ's becoming man, or taking upon himself the seed of Abraham. This qualified him," he observes, "to lay down his life, while the infinite dignity and perfection of his nature, as a person truly divine, made his death fully expressive of Jehovah's displeasure against sin, and hence enabled him to make an adequate atonement for it." That this representation of the character of Christ should be satisfactory to Mr. T. or any man of reflection, I must consider as very strange. Whether he has conveyed by it, or meant to convey any distinct or intelligible ideas, I know not. But I would ask, and with much seriousness and concern, whether he means to say, that Christ, in what he calls his *highest character*, really suffered and died! If "*Christ* became *man*, by taking upon him the seed of Abraham," was this same Christ, I would ask, notwithstanding this transmutation, still *truly divine*, or the *supreme Jehovah!* And did his thus becoming *man*, "qualify *him*," the *supreme Jehovah*, "to lay down his life," while the infinite dignity and perfection of his nature, as a person truly divine, made his death fully expressive of Jehovah's displeasure," that is, his *own displeasure*, "against sin!" This, as I conceive, is a just and correct construction of the passage above quoted. But according to this construction, *divinity*, even the *supreme Jehovah suffered and died*, fully to express his own displeasure against sin!

Should Mr. T. object to this representation as foreign from his meaning, then he must admit that *humanity only*, or *a mere man*, suffered and died on the cross to make atonement for sin, unless he should attempt to elude this concession, by saying that Christ suffered and died in his "*complex character.*" And this he seems to say. His words are—"Thus it is only by the mysterious union

between the divine and human natures in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, that he was prepared to go to the cross of Calvary, and there in shedding his blood, &c."—The *person* of Christ, then, which person consisted of "*divine* and *human* natures," went to the cross and shed *his* blood. The *supreme Jehovah*, and *a man* united in *one person*, suffered and died on the cross, to "express God's infinite abhorrence of sin!"

Thus, according to Mr. T's. hypothesis, an atonement is made for sin, *not* by the sufferings and death of divinity; for "it was impossible that divinity should suffer and die;" and yet it *was* made by the sufferings and death of divinity; for "Christ," or the *supreme Jehovah*, by "taking upon *himself* the seed of Abraham," was qualified to lay down *his* life! And yet it was made by the sufferings and death, *neither* of *humanity*, nor of *divinity*, but by the sufferings and death of humanity and divinity, *united in one person;* for *this* "person went to the cross of Calvary, and there shed his blood!" This representation of the subject involves, as it appears to me, such difficulties and contradictions, as can never be removed nor reconciled;—and such mysteries, as can never be understood nor believed. Nor do I hesitate to say, that, if to understand and believe this strange theory be necessary to salvation, *I see not who can be saved!*

With the view to make it appear that my theory "completely overthrows the atonement," Mr. T. further observes, "Mr. N. denies that Christ is 'the one God.'" "But does not this God," (Christ) he asks, "thus address Israel,—'Thou shalt know that I the Lord am *thy Saviour*, and *thy Redeemer*, the mighty one of Jacob?' 'I am the Lord thy God—and thou shalt know no God but me; *for there is no Saviour besides me?*'" "Now, (continues Mr. T.) if there is no Saviour besides the only living and true God, and if Jesus Christ is not this God, then Jesus Christ is no Saviour."—This reasoning may satisfy Mr. T. and perhaps some others, that Jesus Christ is the one God, besides whom there is none else. But that it should be satisfactory to himself, or any one else, I can see, I confess, *no reason*. No reference is made to Christ in either of the above quoted passages. Several commentators on the texts, whom I have consulted, refer the terms *Saviour* and *Redeemer*, not to Christ, but to *God*. Nor can I but believe, that commentators, generally, if not universally, do the same. Now then, according to Mr. T's. reasoning, (as Jesus Christ is *not* the Saviour and Redeemer referred to in the passages under consideration,) there can be *no God*. I seriously believe that this

conclusion will follow, on the principles of Mr. T's argument. Seldom, if ever, have I seen a solemn and interesting subject treated in so incautious, so loose, and so exceptionable a manner.

If Mr. T. was led to believe that Jesus Christ is the person speaking in the above cited passages, because the speaker assumes the titles, *Saviour* and *Redeemer*, he will be convinced that the ground of his belief is not to be relied on, when, on examination, he shall find that the title, *Redeemer*, is, if ever, *but once* applied to *Christ* in the Bible, and that the title, *Saviour*, is probably as often applied to God, as to Christ.—Besides, it is to be remembered, that *Christ as Saviour*, is distinguished from *God the Saviour*, by marks of *striking discrimination.* Christ was *born* a Saviour—*sent* to be a Saviour—*exalted* to be a Saviour—*raised up* to be a Saviour. And it is by, or through this *constituted* Saviour, "that the kindness and love *of God our Saviour* have toward men appeared."—This constituted Saviour is, if I understand him, that person whom Mr. T. acknowledges as the one God, the supreme Jehovah; and whom he believes it is necessary to acknowledge as such, in order to salvation. "For, (he observes,) none can be saved but by him." But I desire to be thankful on my own behalf, and on the behalf of others, that we have a "more sure word of prophecy," to which we may repair for instruction, than Mr. T's. assumed and extravagant hypothesis. I desire also to be thankful that while the scriptures speak of *many* "Saviours," they exhibit but *one supreme* Saviour, even the *living*, the *great* and *only wise God*, who gave his Son into the world to carry into effect his glorious and saving designs. In *this Saviour* we may safely repose our trust; for in him is *underived and everlasting strength.*

I proceed to consider

A NUMBER OF CHARGES,

With the notices taken of them by Mr. T. page 27 of his letter. "One charge," brought against me by Mr. N. he observes is, "That I have rejected him as a christian minister by refusing to exchange with him; and that this I have *unkindly* done, without assigning to him any distinct or definite reasons for it." That he *has* refused to exchange with me, Mr. T. admits. But that he has refused to assign to me "a definite reason for this step," he says, "*is not true.*" If this charge be an untruth, "slanderous and extremely reprehensible," I am truly sorry that I have done him the wrong; and can only

plead in extenuation of the guilt of my conduct, that it originated in *ignorance* and was committed *without design.*

On refusing me ministerial fellowship, I requested Mr. T. and the late Dr. Strong, as I have before observed, to give me "their reasons in *writing.*" And "*this,*" Mr. T. acknowledges, *we refused.*—Now this is the refusal to which I referred, and I know not that I referred to any other. And this is the refusal which I did consider as *unkind;* nor do I now consider it otherwise.—As to any *distinct and definite verbal reasons,* which Mr. T. assigned for his refusal, I have only to say, I heard none which I considered of that description. His reasons, if he assigned any, I must have considered as very vague, indefinite and evasive.—If, as he *now* says, (although I have no recollection of it) he assigned as a reason for not exchanging with me, "that I denied that Jesus Christ is the true God, thus making him no more than a created being,"—I cannot but consider it as very indistinct and unsatisfactory.

In case I were to refuse to exchange with Mr. T. and to assign as a reason for it, that he believes Jesus Christ to be a man, and "as *truly so* as any of Adam's race," thus excluding from him all divinity; or, that he believes Jesus Christ to be the "only supreme Jehovah," thus excluding from him all humanity, and denying the Father to be God, would he consider this reason as *distinct* and *definite*! Much *less* then, I conceive, could I have *thus* considered his alleged reason.

Mr. T. further observes, that I have accused him of having "perseveringly declined to treat with me as an offending brother, according to the laws of Christ's kingdom."—This I have indeed done, and with much sorrow of heart; and most devoutly do I wish that I could consistently withdraw the charge. But this, I think, I cannot do, so long as the statements which I have made, not far from the beginning of this letter, remain *true, unanswered,* and *unchallenged.*

Another of Mr. N's. charges against me, says Mr. T. p. 28, is, that I "have been instrumental with others, of raising a high, and strong, and hitherto insurmountable barrier to his communion with, and preaching to a considerable number, who formerly attended his ministry."—Of this charge he complains as unjust and injurious. It is, he observes, "undoubtedly understood to import, that I have used exertions with that people to induce them to have no intercourse of a religious nature with him, (Mr. N.) If it does not amount to this, it amounts to nothing." "This charge, (he adds,) must remain unsubstantiated,

and is totally unfounded."—How the above charge has generally been "understood," I know not, nor have I made any inquiry. One of the most respectable and intelligent persons, however, "of the Union Society in Braintree and Weymouth," has unsolicitedly observed to me, that he did not understand the charge according to Mr. T's construction of it, and that he could not conceive that Mr. T. himself so understood it. Nor do I think it likely that it has ever been *so understood by any members of that society*. But be this as it may, I expected to be understood by the charge, that he was instrumental, with others, in raising the "barrier" in question, by *his refusing to exchange with me, and by the manner of his preaching in that society*. But if the charge, contrary to my wish and expectation, is understood by any according to the construction which Mr. T. has given it, it is my hope, that in future, they will construe it in a manner more *natural and just*. But notwithstanding the charge "is totally unfounded," I can discover as yet no reason for retracting it. Nor can I but believe that this same barrier would have continued to this day, were it not that the present pastor of the "Union Society," apparently combines with his "orthodoxy," that "charity," which is the brightest ornament of the christian character, and which, while it is friendly to *christian union*, is hostile to that "middle wall of partition," which owes its erection to *human device and intolerance*.

Mr. T. same page, notices with disapprobation, that, in my letter addressed to him, I "considered him as having violated that religious and solemn obligation, which was created between us, when he received from me, at his ordination, the hand of christian fellowship." But *why* have I considered Mr. T. as having "violated that solemn obligation?" Simply because he has refused me christian fellowship for my supposed heresy? No—but because he refused me this, without "treating with me, as an offending brother, according to the laws of Christ's kingdom." For *this*, I consider him as blameable, and not for acting agreeably to the dictates of his conscience. And I am very sorry to say, that I now consider his blame as increased by the *manner* in which he has attempted to vindicate his conduct. He very plainly insinuates that his refusal to exchange with me is owing to my having believed and represented "the *great God*, and our Saviour" a "creature and nothing more," and that I had so "denied the personality of the Holy Ghost, the eternal Spirit," as to make "him," only "a breath, an emanation, a thing." This insinuation I cannot but view as highly

unreasonable and unjust, as well with respect to Mr. T. as myself. For I had never believed nor represented the *great God* as a *creature* and *nothing more*. So far from this, that I have always represented him as self-existent, independent, and as possessed of infinite and all possible perfections, and as the *only supreme God*. Nor had I ever represented the one Lord Jesus Christ, as a creature and nothing more, according to the *common acceptation* of the term, *creature*. Instead of this, I have always represented him as a being unspeakably—inconceivably greater, more dignified and glorious than such a creature. In doing this, I have been *so explicit*, that I could *not have been misapprehended*.—Nor have I ever represented the "eternal Spirit" as "a breath, an emanation, a thing," in the manner Mr. T. insinuates, if I understand his meaning. Why then has he made the above representation, and especially when he well knows that I have represented the Holy Spirit as self-existent, eternal, &c.? That representation appears to me to be disingenuous, and calculated to make an impression on the minds of his readers very foreign from that which ought to be made.

"Such is the 'expedient' upon which Mr. T. relies in vindication of his conduct," for rejecting me as a christian minister. "Whether it is an honourable one, and answers his purpose, I leave for others to judge." Others will also judge, whether to believe that Jesus Christ is inconceivably superior to a mere creature; and that he is so intimately united to his Father as to be "One" with him in the most endearing manner, and that the Holy Spirit is self-existent, eternal, &c, is "*directly contrary to the scriptures, and subversive of the gospel of the blessed God.*"

I shall now make a few remarks on what Mr. Thomas says respecting

DOCTOR WATTS AND HUMAN CREEDS.

"At the beginning of Mr. N's. publication, (observes Mr. T.) he has an 'address' which he asserts was originally written by Dr. Watts, who in it is represented as opposing the Trinitarian scheme, but adduces no evidence to prove that he ever *wrote* it."—He then with the view to prove, if I understand him, that the Dr. did *not* write that address, refers his readers to the "authentic works, particularly the Psalms and Hymns," of that truly great and good man, and also to invalidate the "representation," made by "Arians respecting him."—This expedient in Mr. T. to "answer his purpose," I consider as unfair

and exceptionable. As to myself, I can truly say that I have not insinuated that Dr. Watts was not a Trinitarian, when he composed his Psalms and Hymns, but the very contrary, as is evident from the N. B. which I added at the end of the "address," above alluded to. Nor do I think that any "Arian," has charged the doctor with a denial of the doctrine of the Trinity, at the time when his Psalms, &c. were composed. All that is believed by any one, so far as I know, is, that he renounced his belief in that doctrine before his death. Nor, to my knowledge, does *any Trinitarian* who has with any considerable care attended to the subject, deny, or even question that this was the case. I distinctly recollect to have heard it observed, twenty years past or more, that the orthodox clergymen in Boston, who corresponded with Dr. Watts, lamented it that "he had so long gazed upon the *Son*, as to produce *blindness*."—It has also been observed by Trinitarians, and perhaps not without reason, that his piece on "The glory of Christ," has been instrumental of bringing off more christians from the Trinitarian ground than any other publication whatever. Nor can it be denied that Dr. Hopkins and other Trinitarian writers consider his views of the pre-existence of Christ's soul, as very dangerous, and as little, if any better, than Arianism. These things considered—and when it is further considered that the address in question, breathes the *very spirit* of Dr. Watts,—and that this "address," is ascribed to him by his "executors," if documents of the highest authority are to be credited, no reasonable doubt can remain, I should think, that it is a genuine production of that eminent man. I fully believe the fact, although I cannot produce demonstrative evidence of its truth. Nor, I presume, can Mr. T. produce such evidence that his "authentic works," are *indeed authentic*. How does he know that these same works are not a forgery of Trinitarians, "written since his death," for the purpose of "adding strength and popularity to their cause?" This hypothesis, for ought I know, is entitled to as much credence as Mr. T's. illiberal suggestion.

Page 29, Mr. T. seems to think that I have spoken very improperly with respect to human creeds.—He observes, that in "an address to Trinitarian professors of religion, I condemn all creeds and articles of faith, which are not expressed in scripture language, however orthodox they may be; and those who use them as terms of christian communion, I charge for so doing, with a variety of heinous sins against the Bible, its Author, and their fellowmen. But these censures and complaints," he adds, "are

altogether groundless."—In reply to this, I have only to say, that had Mr. T. thought proper to produce any quotations from the "address," to substantiate these offensive and heinous "censures and complaints," and had he adduced any evidence to prove that they *are altogether groundless*, I should be disposed, in a decorous manner, to attend to them. But as he has had recourse to but little else than assertion, and that, not the most courteous, I beg leave to refer all such readers as are desirous to know what the address contains, to the address itself. As to others, who are determined not to open their eyes and see for themselves, I am constrained sorrowfully to say, that if they *will* "be ignorant, let them be ignorant."

But Mr. T. continues,—"Orthodox creeds are not only proper, but indispensably *necessary*, as religious tests. For since there are certain doctrines, which are *essential* to christianity, men must believe and love those doctrines, in order to be christians; and hence they must *profess* to believe and love them, that they may give such evidence as will justify others in *considering* and *treating* them as christians. We know, however, that multitudes who say they believe in the christian religion, do nevertheless deny *every one* of its essential doctrines. It is therefore indispensably necessary that the doctrines themselves should be explained, or their true sense and meaning given; and that an assent to them, as thus explained, should be required, as a term of christian fellowship. Now this explanation, or description of the doctrines of christianity, which for the reasons already given, cannot be in the words of scripture, is what we call an orthodox creed."—Such is Mr. T's. assertion, and such is his method of supporting it. And most sincerely do I hope that if he has uttered the words and sentiments of truth and soberness, they will be "received with all readiness of mind." Nor do I know but they are so received by his readers generally. I will however hope that this is not the case, as I cannot but apprehend that his assertion, if believed, is calculated to mislead, and if practically regarded, to produce the most unhappy and evil consequences. Such consequences have indeed, in past times, resulted from Mr. T's. orthodox and *necessary* creed; and they still, in a fearful degree, continue to result from it.

To the account of orthodox creeds, as the instrumental cause, are to be placed a very large portion of the evils, both natural and moral, which have visited, distracted, and convulsed the christian world. Nor can this position be denied or questioned by any one, who is but moderately acquainted with the annals of the christian church.

Should it be asked what I intend by an orthodox creed? I answer, the *very creed which Mr. T. has described*—"an *explanation* of the essential doctrines of the christian religion,"—an explanation "which cannot be in the words of scripture." This, says Mr. T. "is what we call an orthodox creed." This same orthodox creed, then, does *not* consist, and "*cannot be* in the words of scripture"—that "form of sound words," that "good thing," which Paul required Timothy to "hold fast,"—but in the "*enticing words of man's wisdom*,"—"*words which man's wisdom teacheth*!"

To assent to—to "hold fast" this creed of man's device, is "indispensably necessary, as a term of christian fellowship." But to "receive the word of God, not as the word of man, but as it is in truth *the word of God*, is not to be considered "as a religious test," nor sufficient to "give such evidence" to orthodox churches, "as will justify them in *considering* and *treating* as christians," those who assent to the Bible creed, however eminent they may be for their knowledge of the Holy Scriptures—however distinguished for christian piety, or however exemplary in their moral deportment. Persons of *this description* must be refused christian fellowship, and treated as "heathen men and publicans," and for no other reason than because they will not assent to the doctrines of the gospel, as "explained" by Mr. T. or because they hold the words of God in higher estimation, than the words of ignorant and aspiring men, as a religious test.

Such is Mr. T's. "orthodox creed," and such is one of the many evil consequences resulting from it. But in this creed, however, "the true sense and meaning of the essential doctrines of the christian religion must be given." Be it so—yet who is to determine whether this same *true* sense and meaning, be *really* the true sense and meaning of the essentials of christianity? Shall this important question be decided by the Pope of Rome—by the Pope and his Cardinals—by a conclave of bishops—by a general council or association—by pastors of churches in their individual capacity, or by pastors in connexion with their respective churches, consisting as well of women as of men? No little difficulty must arise, I should think, in deciding this question. But on supposition this difficulty could be surmounted, another, more formidable, and less yielding, is to be encountered.—Who is to *explain* the articles of this same orthodox creed? Is every professing christian to explain it for himself, or give it such a construction as he may think proper? Should this liberty be granted, the *supposed* good design and effects of the creed

must be altogether illusory. But should it not be accorded, but christians must be obliged to assent to the creed, according to the explanation of the *creed maker*, or according to the sense given by any *particular men*, or *body of men*, who that can discern between his right hand and left, would assent to it as unquestionably true, or as true but in part only, or in a qualified sense? But if it must be assented to as *wholly* and *strictly true*, according to any supposed definite meaning which may be *given it;* where is the honest and intelligent christian but would withhold from it his assent? Christian churches would soon lose their respectable and conscientious members. Nor could any church be formed on this principle, I am persuaded, deserving the name of a *christian* church.

In this connexion I would ask whether an assent to "the *essential* doctrines of christianity," as contained in this "orthodox creed," supposes that all the *other doctrines* of christianity, are *unessential* to christianity, and may, of course, be either believed, or *disbelieved*, by orthodox christians? Or whether they may estimate them as things *indifferent* and of *no importance*, without incurring the displeasure of the great Head of the church, or giving offence to orthodox churches? I ask this question, not in a cavilling manner, but with a spirit of seriousness and deep concern. I really do not see, according to Mr. T's. representation, but *all* the *other doctrines* of the Bible may be rejected by a person, as of little or no importance, if he will but assent to a creed which he supposes contains its *essential doctrines*. For an assent to *this* creed, "will justify others in *considering* and *treating* him as a christian." But what *are* these "essential doctrines?" One is the doctrine of the Trinity, and perhaps five or six more. According to Dr. Emmons, these doctrines are the following: "the doctrine of moral depravity, the doctrine of regeneration, the doctrine of saints' perseverance, the doctrine of the atonement, the doctrine of the Trinity, the doctrine of election, and the general doctrine of the decrees." "But though all these doctrines, (observes the doctor) are equally fundamental to the gospel, yet they may not all be equally fundamental to salvation."—Whether Mr. T's. orthodox creed contains *more* essential or fundamental articles than this, I know not. But admitting that it does not, and admitting further, that with Dr. E. he does not consider the belief of them *all* as necessary to salvation, then the number of these necessary articles must be very small. Now, if an assent to these articles be *all* that Mr. T. would require as a "religious test," and as a passport to christian "fellow-

ship," I see not but he must consider a *disbelief* of all the other doctrines of the gospel, as furnishing little or no ground for "*considering* and *treating*" such *unbelievers* otherwise than "*as christians*!"

For such a creed I can never be an advocate. Nor do I see how it can be advocated, without an indication "of a want of confidence in, and reverence for the scriptures;" nor without "trifling with our holy religion, and its divine Author."

But should the consideration of these things be insufficient to convince Mr. T. that his theory and practice with respect to human creeds are censurably unjustifiable, let him bring them to a *test* which will have an immediate bearing upon *himself*. Let it be supposed that he is not by profession, a visible member of Christ's kingdom; but desirous to unite himself to some church.—Can he conscientiously assent to the creed of the *church of Rome*, which requires a belief in the doctrine of *transubstantiation*, and other dogmas equally absurd? Can he assent to the creed of the *church of England*, which requires belief in several articles which he *neither does, nor can believe?* Can he assent to the creed of the *Lutheran church*, which requires a belief in the doctrine of *impanation*, or *consubstantiation;* that is, "that the matter of the sacramental bread and wine remain with the body and blood of Christ?" Can he assent to the creed of the *Calvinistic*, the *Arminian*, the *Baptist*, the *Quaker*, or the *Methodist church*? To the creed of *none* of these churches can Mr. T. honestly give his assent, it is *presumed*, without erasing some articles and modifying others? He can assent to no Unitarian creed. But can he give his assent to a *Trinitarian* creed, even so far *as respects the Trinity?* This, it is presumed, he cannot do in the integrity of his heart, in the sense in which many professed Trinitarians hold the doctrine. Can he assent to a creed of this description, which advocates the doctrine of three distinct *Beings*, equal in power and glory; and that to each of these beings belong all the perfections of the one God? Or which advocates the sentiment, that the terms Father, Son and Spirit, import nothing more than three *cardinal perfections* in the one God! Or which requires the belief that these terms imply only three *distinct offices* in the Godhead; or which requires a belief in the *pre-existence of Christ's soul?*—In these different senses, orthodox Trinitarian pastors of churches, and in *this region*, believe the doctrine of the Trinity, if I can understand them. But I am persuaded that Mr. T. could not, with a good conscience, assent to either of these explanations of the Trinity. As

all these creeds then, which, by their respective advocates, are considered as *very orthodox*, will exclude Mr. T. from church membership, what course, I desire to know, is he to take, in order to enjoy the privilege of obeying the command of Christ, "This do in remembrance of me?" Shall he remonstrate to christian ministers and churches? Shall he urge the plea that he believes the Bible to be a revelation from heaven; that he has taken diligent and prayerful pains to understand its pure and holy doctrines, and that they are the joy and rejoicing of his heart? Shall he urge the plea, or shall others urge it in his behalf, that his moral and religious character is fair and unblemished? Or shall he plead that neither Christ nor his apostles, required of any one a belief in their orthodox creeds, as a religious test? Or shall he peremptorily assert that his *own creed* is infallibly true? Vain were this remonstrance. For "orthodox creeds, are not only proper, but indispensably *necessary*, as religious tests." This is a *good and sufficient reason* for the rejection of Mr. T. as an heretick by all these churches—by almost the whole of the christian world. And that gentleman, to be *consistent with himself*, *must approve of it*. But is no relief to be found for Mr. T. in his thus unpleasant and pitiable situation? Is no christian minister or church, advocating human creeds, liberal enough to receive him to their communion? This is hardly to be admitted but on the supposition that he shall be at liberty to assent to the religious test required of him, in such a sense as he may think proper to understand it.

Were Mr. T. in the situation in which the above supposition has placed him, I very seriously and strongly doubt, whether, with integrity of heart, he could gain admission into any christian church on earth, where his faith must be tested by a human creed, "however orthodox," if he must assent to it according to the explanation given of it either by the church, or by the pastor. But if human creeds are to be assented to, in one, in the same, and in a definite sense, they must be the occasion of an abundance of prevarication and hypocrisy, or, of closing the door to the Lord's table against all honest, conscientious and reflecting men. On the other hand, if assent is to be given to these same creeds, in *any sense*, and in *every sense*, they can be considered as religious tests, little if any better than turning into *a ludicrous farce*, a most sacred and solemn subject. To treat this subject with levity and derision, is very far from my design, "though I thus speak." Most sincerely should I rejoice were there no occasion for speaking in this manner. I have used this

freedom of speech, not only from a conviction of its correctness, but with the hope and earnest desire to excite an awakened attention to the subject, and to recommend that study and veneration of the HOLY SCRIPTURES which will effectually annihilate all religious creeds which "stand *not* in the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth," *but* "in the words which man's wisdom teacheth." Alas, that so many professing and real christians should be apparently under the influence of such blindness, as to teach and receive for scripture doctrines the commandments and dogmas of weak and fallible men!

Before I dismiss the above quotation, I feel constrained briefly to notice the following passage contained in it. "We know that multitudes who say they believe in the christian religion, do nevertheless deny, *every one* of its essential doctrines."—Most devoutly do I hope, for the reputation of my brethren in the ministry, and my fellow christians generally, that Mr. T. has used the pronoun *we*, according to the "regal style,"as designating only *himself*. Yet if he means himself *only*, I cannot but be grieved to the very heart at his rash declaration. How does he *know* the *truth* of that declaration? By a spirit of infallibility!—by an immediate revelation from heaven? Nothing short of this could furnish him with the knowledge which he arrogantly, and as I fear, impiously claims. Multitudes of *professing* christians deny *every essential doctrine of the christian religion!* Is this the positive and unqualified declaration of a christian minister! and of the nineteenth century of the christian era? Will the annals of the church of Rome furnish an example of arrogance and infallibility which will parallel with this? Is this indicative of that charity which "thinketh no evil?" of that humility, moderation, and self-diffidence which the gospel recommends and inculcates! Is this the way to promote impartial investigation, the cause of truth, christian peace and brotherly love? Who, that seriously considers the subject but must be convinced that it has a tendency directly the reverse of this! I cannot but hope that a little sober reflection will convince Mr. T. that he has uttered himself very unadvisedly, and induce him to retract, or suitably qualify his offensive, and I must believe, very rash and unfounded declaration.

Apparently with the view to impress the minds of his readers with the belief, that the opposers of human creeds, as religious tests, require no belief in the *truths* of scripture, as a term of christian communion, Mr. T. inquires: "Who, let me ask—who discover the most reverence for God, and regard to his revelation, those who require noth-

ing but an assent to the *words* of scripture, as a term of communion, or those who require assent to the *truths* of scripture, as a term of communion ?" " If, (he adds) to require nothing but an assent to the *words* of scripture, is not an act of trifling with religion and its Author, then I know not what trifling means."—To these remarks, as correct, I readily give my assent ; nor do I doubt that they will readily be assented to by every opposer of human creeds. But their obvious *insinuation* and *bearing*, I consider as very disingenuous and unjust. Who are the pastors, or where are the christian churches, who " require *nothing* but an assent to the *words* of scripture, as a term of communion ?" With such pastors and churches I have *no knowledge*. Nor, I am fully persuaded, *do they exist*. Opposers of human creeds require an assent to what they consider " to be the *truths* of scripture," and as conscientiously, to say the least, as do the advocates of such creeds. And as they consider " the form of sound words," contained in the scriptures—" *the words of God—of the Holy Ghost, and of our Lord Jesus Christ*," as furnishing a *much better test* of a man's orthodoxy and qualification for a seat at the Lord's table, than " *the words which man's wisdom teacheth*," they think it right to advocate, and adhere to *that form*. This is the only " trifling with religion and its Author," with respect to this subject, of which they are guilty. They maintain that the Bible is a sufficient and complete rule of faith and practice—that it is an intelligible and luminous rule—that by this rule they are to judge who are admissible to christian communion, and who are not, and regulate their conduct accordingly. If they find evidence from this rule or test, that applicants for admission to the Lord's table, *believe* the " *truths* of scripture," and are *in other respects qualified*, they admit them ; otherwise they do not. This I consider as a just and fair representation of the *whole matter*. But the advocates for human creeds, as religious tests, not satisfied with the Bible, as the rule of faith and practice, require an assent to a sort of an appendage to the Bible of human contrivance. To this, they require assent, as " *indispensably necessary*" to admission " to their communion ;" because this creed is " the only proper test of orthodoxy !" " Real christians, (says Dr. Emmons,) see the propriety and importance of forming and subscribing creeds or confessions of faith. They know that there are essential doctrines of the gospel ; they know that these doctrines can be ascertained and defined ; and they know that when they are ascertained and defined, and thrown into the form of a creed, they are the only proper test of

orthodoxy. They know, that the Bible is not a proper test of men's religious sentiments; for men may profess to believe the Bible, while they disbelieve, deny, and oppose all the essential doctrines contained it. Hence they see the propriety and importance of a more definite criterion of orthodoxy?"—"They" indeed "cannot see how a gospel church can be formed upon a consistent and permanent foundation, unless they adopt some form of sound words, and bind themselves to abide by it." Again—"Those who are established in the essential doctrines of the gospel are not *ashamed* to profess them (human creeds) before the world, nor *afraid* to bind themselves to believe them, as long as they live, and as long as they exist."

Such, in part, is the creed of Dr. Emmons, which he is neither "*ashamed*," nor "*afraid*" to "profess before the world." According to this creed, if I understand it, "the essential doctrines of the gospel," are not so expressed, as to render their meaning obvious and easy to be understood. "These doctrines," however, "*can* be ascertained and defined." But *how?* *Not* by the *words of scripture*; but by words of human device, "thrown into the form of a creed." But by *whom* are these doctrines to be ascertained and defined? By private christians? No—but by *creed-makers* For should private christians ascertain and define these doctrines, in a manner to clash with the sentiments contained in orthodox creeds, they are to be viewed and treated as hereticks. Men who "sit in Moses's seat" must explain the essential doctrines of the gospel, and *their* explanation of them must be assented to, and not the doctrines themselves as they stand in the Bible, as "the *only* proper test" of their "orthodoxy." This is "indispensably necessary," in order to their fellowship with orthodox christians; for these same christians, or rather their *guides* and *dictators*, well "*know, that the Bible is no proper test of men's religious sentiments!*" *Not* by the clear and steady light which the *Bible* affords, *but* by the "*sparks* which *they have kindled*," they are to ascertain who are to have the privilege of obeying Christ's dying command, and who shall be excluded from that privilege! But who can reasonably object to this mode of procedure, since "men *may* profess to believe the Bible, while they disbelieve, deny, and oppose all the essential doctrines contained in it?" But when they profess to believe in a *human creed*, they *cannot* act a hypocritical part; but must *necessarily* understand, and *undoubtingly* believe all its articles! Besides, as such a creed is "a more *definite* criterion of orthodoxy," than "the Bible;" it would be very injurious, and perhaps

fatal to the *cause of orthodoxy*, were the Bible, instead of this creed, established as a religious test. Indeed, orthodox christians, or rather *ministers*, "cannot see how a gospel church can be formed, upon a consistent and permanent foundation, unless they adopt some form of sound words, and bind themselves to abide by it."—Alas! how deplorable must be the state of our churches—how lamentable must be the decline of evangelical truth, when "masters" in our "Israel," can see no way to form a *christian* church, on a consistent and permanent foundation, but by *rejecting* that "*form of sound words*," as a "test of orthodoxy and bond of christian union,"*which was given by inspiration of God*, and by *using* in its room, "the *enticing words of man's wisdom!*" And what must we think of these same masters, when they publickly declare that they "are not *ashamed* to profess the creeds" which are composed of these same words, "before the world, nor *afraid* to bind themselves to believe them, as *long as they live*, and as *long as they exist!*" But this is not all. They are neither ashamed nor afraid to say of those, who profess to believe and hold fast the form of *scriptural* sound words, and the *truths* which they contain, that they "symbolize with pagans and infidels," how well soever their religious sentiments will bear the scrutiny of the "Bible test," or however exemplary, pious, and devout, may be the tenor of their moral and religious conduct!—In fine, they will not admit these same *pagans* and *infidels* to *their christian* fellowship and communion, unless they will "*profess* to believe," either explicitly, or by implication, "that the Bible is no proper test of men's religious sentiments," and that the creeds, which, *without any scriptural authority*, they impose upon them, "are the *only* proper tests of orthodoxy!"

Most sincerely could I wish that this is an inadmissible comment on Dr. Emmons' text; but while I sincerely believe that it is not, an imperious sense of duty constrains me to enter my most solemn *protest* against it, as derogatory to the holy scriptures; as inconsistent with christian liberty; as a yoke to which christians ought never to bow their necks, and as pregnant with incalculable evils to the most precious interests of protestantism and our common christianity.

Nor can I forbear to raise a warning voice to my fellow christians in relation to this subject.—Christian brethren, "beware of men." "Beware lest *any* man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Beware of that insidious policy, which, "laying

aside the commandments of God," and the Bible itself as a religious test, "teaches for doctrines the commandments of men," and which would take from you "*the key of knowledge.*" Beware of that unjustifiable and dangerous policy which extols human explications of scripture, above the sound and wholesome words of inspiration; and which is calculated to make "the word of God of none effect."

How were the holy scriptures superseded by the *Arabian impostor*, but by persuading his followers to believe, that the productions of *his pen* contained a form of sound words, superior to those which were delivered *by Moses and Jesus Christ.* To what source are you to trace the establishment of the Roman Catholic religion, with all its impious absurdities, but to the assumed infallibility of the pope, and to the *superior excellence of his creed, to that of the Bible as a religious test!* Consider these things well, and receive from them that instruction and that impulse which may be necessary to preserve to you any portion of that "liberty whereby Christ hath made you free"—which may be necessary to preserve you from the most ignominious thraldom. Assert your religious rights and privileges. Acknowledge no man as your master, but Christ. Acknowledge no religious test—submit to no term of communion, which HE has not given and imposed. Observe and do these things, and "ye shall do well." But depart from them—and who knows but "destruction and misery will be in your ways."

With the hope that these monitory hints will not be in vain, I shall now briefly notice a few things which Mr. T. has advanced respecting

THE CRY AND PRACTICE OF PERSECUTION.

He observes that "this cry," (the cry of Mr. N.) "of persecution, is no new thing." "It is a cry, (he continues,) which the perverters of the truth have always raised against those, who have refused to own and treat them as its defenders."—As the cry which I have made of persecution, according to Mr. T's. own acknowledgment, consists in speaking of anti-trinitarians as "the dissenting and rejected brethren" of Trinitarians, he does not consider it, I would hope, as a very bitter, or loud, or alarming, or unreasonable cry. But be this as it may, it gives me too little concern to take further notice of it. But that he should say that the reformers from popery—the many martyrs to papal bigotry and intolerance, and that the puritanical dissenters from the church of England, "were

perverters of the truth," occasions me deep concern, mingled with astonishment and regret. That this host of worthies were persecuted in the most cruel and unrelenting manner, and many of them to death in its most horrid forms, as heretics and perverters of the truth, in the estimation of their persecutors, is readily admitted. But in what did their heresy consist, but in "hearkening unto God rather than unto men;" and in prizing and holding fast the scriptural "form of sound words," rather than a form of human device! And how did they pervert the truth, but by embracing and earnestly contending for it? Although their own faith and practice were not unexceptionable, yet I have ever considered them much less so, than the faith and practice of their persecutors, "who refused to own and treat them as the defenders of truth." Nor do I think that the "cry which they raised against" these their persecutors, deserving of censure or disapprobation.

Mr. T. I am sensible, does not in a direct manner, and by name, charge these persecuted and martyred christians with perverting the truth. But the charge fairly, if not necessarily admits of, and requires this construction. For by whom has the cry of persecution been raised for a thousand years past, but by christians of the above description!

"Just so the Arians, (continues Mr. T.) of past ages, who made high pretensions to candor and charity, complained of the orthodox, because they would not receive them to their communion. But how did these same candid and charitable Arians conduct, when they were in power? They raised the sword of persecution, as the pagans had done before them, and shed torrents of christian blood. Nor did they hesitate to devote to imprisonment, to banishment and to death, even those eminent ambassadors of Christ, whose locks had grown white in his service. Thus fell this host of martyrs, merely because they would not deny the divinity of their Saviour, and of their Sanctifier. See Milner's church history. It is pleasing to learn from the same source, that the Trinitarians, when they gained the ascendancy, as they repeatedly did at the close of such scenes, were never known to persecute their persecutors, or to do any thing more than to exclude them from their communion."—Had not the general character of Mr. T's. letter fortified my mind against the impression of surprise, the above quotation would have given me as powerful, as an unexpected shock. But prepared as I was to meet with misstatements, misrepresentations and unsupported assertions, yet it did not fail

to produce some shock of surprise, with the mingled emotions of regret and indignant grief.

Seldom, if ever, have I seen a statement or representation which will parallel with the above quotation in regard to incorrectness and illiberality. However correct it may be in some of its parts, yet when viewed in its general character and apparent design, it is to be rejected as highly exceptionable and unjust. Nor will this for a moment be doubted by any one whose acquaintance with ecclesiastical history is not *very* imperfect and circumscribed.

That "Arians, when they were in power," were chargable with the crime of persecution—that "they tortured and put to death" many "of the Trinitarians," is a truth, however sad and melancholy, which can neither be denied nor concealed. Nor does their cruel and barbarous conduct, whatever might have been their provocations, admit of excuse. So far from volunteering myself as a vindicator or apologist for their execrable crimes, that I give my voice against them as disgraceful both to the christian religion, and to the christian name. But that these same Arians, at the times to which Mr. T. refers, discovered a worse spirit, or carried the cruel, bloody and infernal work of persecution, to a greater length than did the Trinitarian party, I am not prepared to admit.

Milner, so far from saying, as Mr. T. asserts, that "the Trinitarians were never known to persecute their persecutors, or to do any thing more than to exclude them from their communion," *says*, that they *did* do more than this. He expressly says, "that the orthodox and heretical," or Trinitarians and Anti-trinitarians, "did each their utmost to support their several pretensions." He further says, that "the former," the Trinitarians, from the want, or at least from the very low state of experimental religion, were deprived of the very best method of supporting the truth, by shewing its necessary connexion with the foundation of true piety and virtue." He adds, that the emperor "Constantine," whose "regard for christianity in general, was doubtless sincere," wrote both to Alexander and Arius, the leaders of the two parties, "and blamed them both,"—that "Arius was deposed and forbidden to enter into Alexandria," and that both "he and his associates were banished into Illiricum."

Not only were Trinitarians in these tumultuary times, and during these violent struggles, chargeable with cruel persecution, but afterwards, "when they gained the ascendancy," they revived and pushed this barbarous and bloody business to an almost incredible extent. The "middle ages of the church," according to Milner, as well

as other ecclesiastical historians, exhibit scenes of horror, at which humanity must revolt; and scenes too which are almost, if not entirely, to be ascribed to *Trinitarians*, as the merciless authors.

"The Waldenses are the middle link, which connects the primitive christians, and the fathers of the reformed." These Waldenses, by whatever name they may be called, during the period of several successive centuries, were the unhappy and miserable victims of Trinitarian persecution.

For the information of my readers, who may not be acquainted with their history, the following sketches of it are submitted as correct:—"*Waldenses*, or *Valdenses*, are a sect of reformers, who made their first noticeable appearance about the year 1160. They were most numerous about the vallies of Piedmont. They were formed into religious assemblies, first in France, and afterwards in Lombardy. Whence their sect was propagated throughout the other provinces of Europe, with incredible rapidity, and with such invincible fortitude, that neither fire nor sword, nor the most cruel inventions of merciless persecution, could damp their zeal, or entirely ruin their cause."

Their christian and moral character was exemplary in a distinguished and eminent degree. Their faith was simple and evangelical. They professed to "believe in, to worship *one God, through* the *one Mediator*, and *by* the influence of the *Holy Spirit*:"—that "Christ is our life and truth, and peace, and righteousness; our Shepherd and Advocate, our Sacrifice and Priest, who died for the salvation of all who should believe, and also rose again for our justification," and that "the Holy Ghost is our comforter, proceeding from the Father, and from the Son; by whose inspiration we pray, &c."

Such, according to Milner, was their belief of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This writer also allows, that the Albigenses, who were essentially the same with the Waldenses, were called by Hoveden, an English historian, Arians—or rather, "he calls their doctrine the Arian heresy." "But Arian, or Manichee, (observes Milner,) or any other term of reproach, sufficiently answers the design, of determined persecutors." And Benedict, the Baptist historian, does not hesitate to say of them, "Some were Arians, Unitarians, &c."

The truth seems to be, that no uniform system of doctrines was common to them all; but that diversity in both religious opinions and modes of worship existed among them.

They were, however, of one heart and one mind in opposing papal tyranny, subscription to the orthodox, established, infallible catholic creed, and the pride, usurpation and intolerance of the dominant clergy. And that they were generally opposers of the doctrine of a *triune God*, there is much reason to believe. But be this as it may, their religious and moral character, generally, was pre-eminently fair and estimable. Their principal crime was *heresy*, or in other words, their hearkening unto God rather than unto men in matters of conscience and religion. But this was abundantly sufficient to rouse against them the resentment and implacable enmity of the Trinitarian and orthodox church. As they were "perverters of the truth;" this same Trinitarian church, notwithstanding they did "nothing more than to exclude them from their communion," if we are to believe Mr. Thomas, *did much more*, if we may believe Milner, and other writers who had *authority* for what they wrote. The Trinitarian church, having "the ascendency," persecuted these dissenters in a most cruel and unrelenting manner. This is abundantly evident from the statements of Milner, although Mr. T. would make you, if I understand him, believe the contrary. His positive assertion relative to this subject, supported by *no authority*, I must consider as unjustifiable as it is erroneous and unfounded. And that you will be constrained to view it in the same light, admits not of a doubt, if you have so much desire to know the truth as to read the two last chapters in the third volume of Milner's church history. But as the following quotations from that writer may be sufficient to satisfy your minds, permit me to request you to read them with awakened and very serious attention.

This writer makes it satisfactorily evident with respect to these dissenters from the established Trinitarian church, that while "in morals and life they were good; true in words, unanimous in brotherly love; blameless and without reproach among men, and that they obeyed the *divine* commands with all their might," thousands of them were seen patiently to bear persecution for the sake of Christ." "Great numbers of them suffered continually for their principles." "They were the peculiar objects of papal vengeance;" and "were exposed to a persecution as cruel and atrocious as any recorded in history;" that "thousands of them were hanged and burned;" that "three hundred thousand" of their persecutors "filled their country with carnage and confusion for a number of years," producing "almost inconceivable scenes of baseness, perfidy, barbarity, indecency and hypocrisy;" that

many of these persecuted christians were "delivered to the secular power to be burned;" that great numbers of them "during the severity of winter," were obliged to flee "to one of the highest mountains of the Alps, the mothers carrying cradles, and leading by the hand those little children, who were unable to walk;" that "many of them were murdered, and others starved to death; that a hundred and eighty children were found dead in their cradles, and the greatest part of their mothers died soon after them."—"The civil power permitted the papal to indulge its thirst for blood. Dreadful cruelties were inflicted on the people of God," and "the fires continued to be kindled." Many of them were "obliged to leave their settlements, and were reduced to the extremity of attempting, in the midst of winter, to pass over a high mountain;" in which attempt, "the greatest part of them perished." "In the valley of Layse, four hundred little children were found suffocated in their cradles, or in the arms of their deceased mothers, in consequence of a great quantity of wood being placed at the entrance of the caves, (to which they had fled) and set on fire." "The murders, rapes and desolations," committed on these people "were horrible beyond all description."

Thus this infernal persecuting business was carried on by Trinitarians against the pure church of Christ, from the twelfth, to the end of the sixteenth century, with savage and unrelenting cruelty. "No part of Europe, (continues Milner,) was exempt from the sufferings of these christian heroes."

Among the idle and extravagant pretexts which their persecutors employed as motives for their conduct, or in vindication of it, *this* was one, that the "*children*," *of these heretics*, "*were born with black throats; that they were hairy, and had four rows of teeth!*"

"Thus fell this host of martyrs by the hand of those who (probably) would have assented to every thing which Mr. T. requires, as a term of christian fellowship." But however this may be, yet that gentleman seems anxious to have you believe "that Trinitarians, when they gained the ascendancy, were never known to do any thing more, than to exclude" dissenters "from their communion;" and that "*perverters* of the truth have *always* raised the cry of persecution against those, who have refused to own and treat them as its defenders!"

Should Mr. T. in vindication of himself, say, that in speaking of persecution, he referred to the fourth century, it will be of little, or no avail to his purpose, unless he can make it appear that the cry of persecution has not been

"raised" since that period; and that Trinitarians, at that time, were not chargeable with the crime of persecuting their persecutors. But he produced no proof, nor is it in his power to do it, to substantiate either of those hypotheses. In saying this, I am justified by the authority of Mosheim, of Benedict, and others, as well as that of Milner.

Mosheim, who was not less hostile to Arianism than Milner, has the candour to acknowledge that "Theodosius the Great, who raised the secular arm in the fourth century against the Arians, with a terrible degree of violence, drove them from their churches, enacted laws, whose severity exposed them to the greatest calamities, and rendered, throughout his dominions, the decrees of the council of Nice triumphant over all opposition." The Dr. adds—"During the long and violent contest between the Nicenians (Trinitarians) and Arians, the attentive and impartial will acknowledge, that unjustifiable measures were taken, and great excesses committed on both sides. So that when, abstracting from the merits of the cause, we only consider with what temper, and by what means the parties defended their respective opinions, it will be difficult to determine which of the two exceeded most the bounds of probity, charity, and moderation."

When it is considered that both of the above writers were decided Trinitarians, it may well be believed that they have not exaggerated the cruel and barbarous treatment which the Arians received from their Trinitarian opponents. May it not also be reasonably supposed that they have not been so favourable towards the Arians as strict impartiality would have dictated? This can hardly be doubted, and especially when it is considered that Dr. Maclaine, the translator of Mosheim, does not hesitate to say that the Arian party have never been treated with justice and impartiality. His words are, "The Arian history stands yet in need of a pen guided by integrity and candour, and unbiassed by affection or hatred."

It is not, however, a little to their own reputation, and in favour of the cause of truth, that *some* Trinitarian writers have possessed so much integrity and candor, as to acknowledge that their own party in the disgraceful and horrid business of persecution, have been as blameable as their opponents.

But were Mr. T's. statement with respect to persecution in the fourth century, to be admitted as true, yet it could have no favourable aspect on Trinitarians of succeeding ages and more modern times. It would indeed exhibit *these* in contrast with *those* in a most unfavourable light.

If Arians in the early age of the church, "tortured and put to death, thousands and thousands of the Trinitarians;" Trinitarians, in "the latter times," have tortured and put to death tens of thousands and ten of thousands both Trinitarians and Anti-Trinitarians. To whom but to Trinitarians, are to be ascribed all the cruel persecutions inflicted, and the "torrents of blood" spilt by the church of Rome? To what, as the principal source, are to be traced, but to the Trinitarian church of England, the violent persecutions which have taken place in that Island? Who, but John Calvin, one of the leaders of protestant Trinitarians, brought Servetus to the stake, and exulted in his lingering and torturous death, because he was a heretick?* And who but Trinitarians have exercised in New-England, a persecuting spirit against their dissenting brethren to the despoiling them of their reputation and goods; and of their habitations and liberty—and even to their imprisonment, banishment and death! And who but Trinitarians are now, not only as individuals, but in associated bodies, zealously engaged in representing their brethren, who do

* "A multitude of testimonies," says Benedict, "go to prove that Calvin was at the head of this barbarous affair. But omitting all others, I will transcribe a part of a letter written by him in 1561, to the Marquis Paet, high chamberlain to the king of Navarre. "Honour, glory, and riches," said he to the Marquis, "shall be the reward of your pains; but above all, do not fail to rid the country of those scoundrels, who stir up the people to revolt against us. Such monsters should be exterminated, as I have exterminated Michael Servetus, the Spaniard."

Servetus' notion of the Trinity according to Mosheim, was as follows: "The Deity, before the creation of the world, had produced within himself, two *personal representations*, or *manners of existence*, which were to be the *medium* of intercourse between himself and mortals, and by whom, consequently, he was to reveal his will, and to display his mercy and beneficence to the children of men; that these two representatives were the *Word* and the *Holy Ghost*; that the former was united to the man Christ, who was born of the Virgin Mary by an omnipotent act of the divine will; and that on this account, Christ might properly be called God; that the Holy Spirit directed the course, and animated the whole system of nature; and more especially produced in the minds of men wise counsels, virtuous propensities, and divine feelings; and finally, that these two *representations* were to cease after the destruction of this terrestrial globe, and to be absorbed into the substance of the Deity, from whence they had been formed."

Such was the heresy of the "monster Michael Servetus, the Spaniard," whom John Calvin, a Trinitarian, exterminated, and then gloried in the *glorious* deed!

not believe in the "strange doctrine of a triune God," as "symbolizers with pagans and infidels"—as *Belshamites*—as holding doctrines which are "subversive of the gospel"—as "*professedly* rejecting and hating all the doctrines which are essential to christianity," and as "bound to inevitable destruction and perdition!" Who but Trinitarians by this, and by other expedients, are making vigorous exertion to render their dissenting brethren odious and abhorrent in the view of the public—to destroy their reputation and influence—to drive from them their affectionate parishioners—to depose them from office, and to "make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations?"

All these things do not apply, I am persuaded, to Trinitarians, without exception. Nor can they be said of any of them, I would hope, in a full and unqualified sense. But enough has not been said I fear, suitably to awaken and arouse the slumbering attention of multitudes to search and see whether these things are indeed so, and to "judge even of *their own selves* what is right."

Indiscriminately to charge any sect or denomination of christians with the indiscretions, rashness, blind zeal and the persecuting conduct of their leaders and champions, would be illiberal and unjust. It is but right to admit that many Trinitarian christians, and even in times of high excitement and religious hostility, have distinguished themselves by their moderation and candour; and by the mild and pacific spirit of their great and benevolent Master. And that many characters of this description are now to be found among Trinitarian ministers and private christians, is not to be questioned. Nor can I doubt that they witness with grief, disapprobation, and disgust, the precipitate, uncharitable and overbearing measures pursued by too many of their brethren. And it is devoutly to be hoped that they will be happily instrumental in checking their violence and restraining their excesses.

But notwithstanding the policy and practice of persecution are principally to be attributed to Trinitarian christians, yet I am far from believing that their dissenting brethren are not men of like passions with themselves. Diversity in religious opinion affords no conclusive evidence of real and essential diversity of moral character. Mankind, in a moral view, it must be acknowledged, are *all* the descendants of *apostate Adam*. Nor, should Anti-trinitarians become the predominant party, as they probably will, before many years shall have elapsed, who can say that they will not give the same measure to their

Trinitarian brethren, which they now mete to them? Although I most sincerely hope that this will not be the case, yet I would by no means decide that it will not.

It is far from being certain that "*liberal* christians," possess more *gospel* liberality of sentiment and disposition than their "orthodox and *illiberal*" brethren. Among both parties excellent characters are to be found. But neither party is exempt from errors, either of opinion or practice. When liberal men are disposed "violently to quarrel for liberality," and to load with reproach and calumny their orthodox brethren, they "know not what manner of spirit they are of." This spirit is as foreign from the spirit of Christ, as the spirit of rigid, severe, and overbearing orthodoxy. To discountenance and suppress both, must be the object of considerate, *truly* catholic and good men of both parties. May their efforts be crowned with the most desirable success.

THE POSTSCRIPT

Of Mr. T's. letter shall be duly noticed. In it he observes, "I have been informed that a report, in substance as follows, is circulated and believed in and about the place of Mr. Norton's residence, viz. that the members of the Association, to which he read his letter in manuscript, gave their consent that it should be published. And it is understood that on this ground, he and others are attempting to vindicate his conduct in doing as he has done relative to this matter." He adds, "there is not the *least* foundation for the above report."—In reply, I have only to say, that until I read Mr. T's. postscript, I had heard nothing of this same report—that I have since heard of no such report, and that it is a report, so far as I know, which has neither "circulated," nor been made, "in or about the place of Mr. N's. residence."—Whether this declaration will satisfy Mr. T. in relation to the subject, I know not. But of this he may be assured, that neither "Mr. N." nor "others," are desirous to "vindicate his conduct," by the expedient to which Mr. T. refers, nor by any other expedient, as they are well satisfied that his conduct, "relative to this matter," requires no other vindication than its own integrity and correctness.

CONCLUSION.

In the preceding review of the Rev. Mr. Thomas' letter, I beg leave to observe that I have performed a very unpleasant and painful task. In the performance of it,

however, I have realized that satisfaction, which results from a consciousness that I have endeavoured faithfully to discharge a duty, which I conceived I owed to God and the Saviour, to Mr. T. to the public, to the people of my charge, and to myself.—In stating facts, it has been my object to "set down nought in malice"—to exhibit "unvarnished truth"—to avoid all irritating expressions, and to inflict no wound but should be "a kindness," and to give no reproof that might not be "an excellent oil." If I have not steadily kept this object in view, I ask forgiveness both of God and man for the wrong.

In the controversial parts of the review, I have endeavoured to ascertain and illustrate "the truth as it is in," and with respect to "Jesus." How far I have been successful in this attempt, my readers must judge for themselves. While they test the sentiments which I have advanced by the word of God in the exercise of their own understandings, it is my sincere hope that they will not embrace them any further than they will abide the scrutiny of that infallible criterion. To lead them, or any of my fellow men and fellow christians into error, respecting the character of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, or any other religious subject, is very far from being my aim. Voluntarily to do this, no consideration would induce me. As the developement of truth has been my object, so it is my hope that nothing but truth will be embraced by any of my readers.

If I have suggested any thing which may appear disrespectful of "orthodoxy," it is my wish that it may not be so understood. For the orthodox theory, and according to the common acceptation of the term, I have a sincere respect. It has *generally*, the approbation of my understanding, and I hope of my heart. But while I cannot assent to all its articles, it is my wish that its general character might be supported, and *so supported*, as to conciliate the good opinion of its supposed or real opposers, and not to brace them against, and drive them to a greater distance from it. "Orthodox," and "heterodox" christians do not, I am persuaded, generally understand each others' theories as they ought, nor treat each other in that courteous, candid, ingenuous and christian manner, as is devoutly to be wished. Were they but suitably disposed to make themselves better acquainted with each others' sentiments, and to conduct towards each other with all that "meekness and wisdom," which the gospel recommends and inculcates, we should not hear it said of either party, that they are "blasphemers," or that they

"*professedly* deny every essential doctrine of the gospel." "These things ought not so to be."

It is deeply to be deplored that such accusations should be mutually made of each other, and especially by christian ministers. By these things they injure themselves, give occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully, blast the growth of christian charity, set at irreconcileable variance, those who should "dwell together in unity," and greatly hurt their common cause.—How long are christians to forget that "love thinketh no evil," and "worketh no ill to his neighbour?"

If I have suggested any thing which may have the appearance of *soliciting* my brethren who have denied me ministerial fellowship, to restore me to that fellowship by exchanges of professional labours, it is my wish that they would not give it this construction. Their rejection of me as a christian brother, has indeed occasioned me deep solicitude and grief; and particularly their *manner* of doing it. *This* I consider as *altogether unjustifiable.* Nor do I see how they can justify it to their own consciences. But notwithstanding I deeply regret it, that this great breach is made between us, and most sincerely wish it might, in a reasonable and christian manner, be healed; yet I can do "nothing less nor more," than to assure them, *generally*, with a spirit of love and friendship, of my readiness to renew and hold with them ministerial intercourse, as in times past. After the overtures which I have already made them to this purpose, they cannot reasonably expect that I should make any further advance. If in any thing I have wronged them, or treated them disrespectfully; or if, by any immorality or indiscretion, I have offended them, most willingly will I acknowledge my fault, and ask their forgiveness. But I am conscious of nothing by which I could thus have offended them, or any of them. Nor am I apprehensive that they lay any such fault to my charge. Every thing which christianity requires, I am ready to do, to conciliate their friendship, and to restore ministerial intercourse and harmony between us. But to solicit, or even to *accede* to such intercourse and harmony as a *favour* on their part, is far from my design. Nor do I wish from them any such solicitation of me. If, as christian ministers, placed on the footing of equality, we can harmoniously walk together, I shall sincerely rejoice. But if a separation between us *must* continue, I shall consider myself, in *no degree*, as responsible for it, or the evils which may thence result.

Should the exertions which have been made to exhibit my sentiments in relation to the doctrine of the Trinity as subversive of the gospel, and as leading to inevitable destruction and perdition, have been productive of their designed effect, with respect to any of my readers, I most earnestly entreat them, on *their own account*, very seriously to inquire whether their minds have not been unduly influenced. If, christian brethren, your minds have, by misrepresentations, however undesigned, been "corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ, and soured with the leaven of rash and interdicted judging, it is highly important, for your own good, for the cause of truth and christian charity, that you should be convinced of it. That you may be able to decide satisfactorily upon this subject, permit me to ask, whether, in your estimation, the following sentiments are subversive of the gospel, and if believed, destructive of the soul—"There is one God, even the Father, who is self-existent, independent, and possessed of infinite and all possible perfections, both natural and moral. There is one Lord Jesus Christ, who, in every respect, (excepting his body) is unspeakably superior in dignity and glory to any human or angelic being; and who is, in the most endearing and intimate manner, united to the one God his Father; insomuch that they are *One*—one in heart, in design and pursuit—one, *so far as two distinct persons can be one.* There is also one Holy Ghost or Spirit, even the Spirit of the one God, and essentially the same as the one God himself." Do you believe, christian brethren, that these articles of faith are anti-christian—that they constitute "a scheme, which is subversive of the gospel of Christ"—a scheme which "overthrows the work of redemption," and that if embraced, "inevitable destruction and perdition awaits a sinful and ruined world!"—Do you, *can* you believe this? May I not be persuaded better things of you? I hope, and indeed trust that I may.—But the above articles of faith are those which I have exhibited as articles of my belief, because, as it appears to me, they are clearly exhibited in the Bible. And for believing these articles, I am represented by some of my brethren in the ministry, as destroying the christian faith—as symbolizing with pagans and infidels—as unworthy of the name of a minister of Christ, and as a heretick to be rejected either *with*, or *without* admonition, by all orthodox christians. But while these things occasion me little or no personal solicitude, and while I desire to bless God for the *benefit* which I trust I have derived from them, yet I cannot feel indifferent to them as to the effects which

they *have* produced, or *may* produce on *your minds and conduct*. That they have been and now are of a baleful nature, cannot reasonably be questioned ; and that they will become more extensively and fearfully pernicious to the order, peace and harmony of christian churches, and to the very spirit of christianity itself, there is much reason to apprehend. " The signs of the times," are indeed portentous. Convulsions and " days of vengeance," seem to avait our " American Israel," and the hearts of many who wish well to Zion, seem to be " failing them for fear, and for looking after those things," which threaten her prosperity and dearest interests. May God in mercy avert the threatened evils in " thinking upon us for good"—in checking the progress of religious usurpation—in counteracting every human device, which opposeth and exalteth itself against the knowledge of God—in attaching the minds and hearts of christians more strongly to the *form of sound words*—to the *pure words*, and the *wholesome words*, which were given by his *own inspiration*, and in pouring out upon us all that Spirit of uncorrupted religion, which is " first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

But you are not to expect, Christian brethren, these great, and good, and desirable events, but in the use of *proper means*. You are to *watch*, and to *pray*, and to *act*. You cannot too carefully watch *your minds*, that they be not perverted from the knowledge of the truth ; *your hearts*, that no root of bitterness and hatred of your brethren spring up, to destroy charitable and religious affections ; and *your conduct*, that it " give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God." Nor can you be too watchful of *your ministers* with respect both to *their sentiments and deportment*, that they may not " teach you for doctrines the commandments of men"—and " spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ :"—that they may not despoil you of that liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and by imposing upon your necks a galling, dishonourable and slavish yoke. Against these evils you cannot guard with too much vigilance. Nor ought you to treat admonition on this subject, as *unseasonable* and with *neglect*. Of this, if not already, you may soon and *sorrowfully* be convinced. *Remember that you are warned.*

To watchfulness, you must add *prayer*, importunate and persevering prayer, as you would hope that evil things and evil days will cease ; and that better things and better

days will succeed. Pray therefore with all prayer ; pray without ceasing ; pray and faint not. Pray for *yourselves*, that you may better understand, more highly prize, and more copiously imbibe the spirit of the gospel ; and that you may more abound in its fair, and lovely, and beneficent fruits.—Pray for *your ministers*, that they may more nearly imitate in humility, meekness and divine charity, their great and glorious Exemplar—that they may not claim to " have dominion over your faith, but be helpers of your joy," "in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity ; and that in all things they may conduct as becometh the gospel of Christ." Pray that a door may be opened for a free and impartial examination of the holy scriptures, and that none need be afraid thus to examine for themselves, nor to communicate the result of their examination : and that all spiritual pride, and arrogance, and usurpation, and tyranny may come to an end.

Let *exertion* also accompany your prayers. In a proper manner do whatever may be in your power to suppress the evil practices among too many professing christians, as well as others, of " lying against the truth," and " one another ;" of slander, and evil speaking, of intemperance and all its attendant vices. Do whatever you can to suppress an uncharitable, censorious, bitter, and dividing spirit, as well with respect to politicks as religion. Exert yourselves to render the savage and horrid " custom of war," odious and abhorrent, and all *unhallowed* religious warfare, base and contemptible. Arouse yourselves to assert and maintain your rights as christians, and to break every yoke of oppressive bondage. Do these things, christian brethren, and reasonably may you expect, that through the kind and merciful interposition of divine Providence, many of the evils which you see and feel will soon be removed, and " happier times and scenes arise."

In this connexion I beg leave to invite your attention, briefly to the subject of religious creeds, or confessions of faith, of human fabrication, with the view that you may better understand it, and act accordingly.

In doing this, I pray you to be assured, that I am influenced neither by hope nor fear of a personal nature, as the church of which I have the honour and satisfaction to be the pastor, are not entangled, nor have been entangled by any human creed for the space of twenty years ; nor do they wish, I presume, to be so entangled by any authority I might be disposed to arrogate and exercise, or any other man, or body of men. They are disposed to acknowledge no man as master on earth, " knowing that their Master

is in heaven." By his laws and by his religion, as they find them in the Bible, they profess to be fully satisfied. By these laws and by this religion they have endeavoured, I hope, to regulate their faith and practice. And by them, without the aid of any human device, they have more fully maintained, I presume, christian discipline, than any church in the vicinity. They have with a good degree of care purged out the old leaven, by ejecting from their body disorderly walkers, while some neighbouring churches, with which you are, perhaps, well acquainted, have wholly neglected for a long series of years, the disciplinary laws of Christ's kingdom, and have retained in their communion *notorious drunkards*, and *scandalous characters*. *But these members are orthodox.* And human creeds are "indispensably *necessary* as religious tests," and to "justify" these same churches, "in considering and treating" these *same members* "as *christians!*"

Christian brethren, seriously consider these things—examine the subject of human creeds with minds open to conviction, and with awakened, solemn and interested attention. You do not, I strongly suspect, view the subject in a just and clear point of light. Fully persuaded, as I am, that the Bible contains the best and most perfect rule of faith and practice, there can, I conceive, be no need of any other, either as to *words* or *form*. With this rule you are to make yourselves well acquainted. You are to understand it for yourselves *individually*, and then to test by it the qualifications of others, for admission to your christian fellowship. Those whom you consider, in the view of this rule, as admissible to your fellowship, you will admit—others you will reject. With this rule, and this rule *only*, as the standard of your faith and practice, you are to act conscientiously, and in the fear and love of God. Thus to think and act for yourselves, you have a just and claimable right. For this your christian liberty I plead. I protest only against those who would take it from you, or allow you only the *semblance* of its enjoyment. But while I wish you to assert and exercise this liberty, I must be permitted to remind you, to do nothing "by partiality," but allow to others the same liberty which you have a right to claim and exercise yourselves.

But do you not perceive that you are deprived of this liberty when you are required, by your spiritual guides, to assent to creeds of their own forming; and not only this, but to make these same creeds the passport to your christian fellowship? It is to little purpose, to say that these creeds were formed by the private members of churches, as they have had a voice and have taken an active part in

their formation. *Ministers*, and *not the brotherhood*, are the principal agents in the business. But were it otherwise, yet all who afterwards become members of churches, must give their assent to these creeds, without having had any "part or lot in the matter." Thus people, generally, must assent to creeds, made ready for them by human device, or be deprived of a great and precious religious privilege! and creeds too, which *may be*, and in some respects *really are*, repugnant both to reason and revelation. But notwithstanding this, it is *certain* that a human creed, if we are to believe Dr. Emmons, is *necessary*; for it is "the *only* proper test of orthodoxy;" while "the Bible is *no* proper test of men's religious opinions!" Will you, christian brethren, calmly and unmoved, suffer the *Word of God* to be treated with this apparent *indignity* and *shameless contempt*? Will you countenance, justify, support, and practically defend this treatment? What then is man in his best estate! "Wo worth the day!"

But you will be told that you need not fear to *prefer* a *human creed* to the *Bible*, as a religious test, because a "*gospel church* cannot be formed upon a consistent and permanent foundation," *without it*;—and because "this has been the general opinion of orthodox christians ever since the primitive days of christianity,* who have carried

* Whatever might have been Dr. Emmons' view, it is a very singular fact that the orthodox creed in the days of primitive christianity, was, as respects some of the most distinguished fathers, in direct opposition to the orthodox creed of the present day, at least in relation to catholicism. The ancient creed acknowledged even *atheists*, whose moral character was *good*, to be *christians*; but the modern creed, will not allow even the most *exemplary christians* to be any better than *infidels*.

Justin Martyr, who, according to Mosheim, was "a man of eminent piety and considerable learning," expressly says, (Apol. 2. p. 83.) "Καὶ οἱ μετὰ λογου βιωσαντες, χριστιανοί εισί, καναθεοι ενομίσθησαν." Et quicunque, cum ratione vixere, christiani sunt, quamvis athei, et nullius numinis cultores habiti sunt.

"Οἱ δε μετὰ λογου βιωσαντες, καὶ βιουντες, χριστανοὶ και αφοβοι και ατταραχοι, υπαρχουσι." Et quicunque cum ratione vixere, atque etiam nunc vivunt, christiani sunt, & extra metum & perturbationem, omnes sunt.

The plain English of these passages is, *And whoever have lived with reason are christians, although atheists, and are accounted as the worshippers of no God. And whoever have lived with reason, and now live after the same manner, are christians, and they are all without fear and perturbation.*

For these passages from Justin, who suffered martyrdom for his profession of, and adherence to the christian religion in the second century, I am indebted to a very learned and highly

their opinion into practice."—All this, to hush your alarm, to remove your fears, and to quiet your con-

esteemed friend, who, with me, would probably object to the sentiments they contain as correct. In exhibiting them to public view, my design is to contrast in a strong light ancient and modern catholicism. While *that* embraces atheists as christians, *this* rejects christians as atheists, or at least as infidels, and as unworthy the christian name.

If Dr. Emmons is disposed to "symbolize" with Justin Martyr, and other orthodox primitive christians, I see not but he must adopt a creed somewhat different from that by which he and other orthodox christians test men's religious opinions.

But should the Dr. reject that orthodox and "eminently pious" christian martyr, as an heretic, what will he say of more modern christians, whose orthodoxy cannot reasonably be questioned? Will he say and persist in saying, that these christians "knew that the Bible is not a proper test of men's religious opinions"—"that they saw the propriety and importance of a more definite criterion of orthodoxy," and that they "could not see how a gospel church could be formed upon a consistent and permanent foundation, unless they adopted some form of sound words, and bound themselves to abide by it?"—Let Richard Baxter then, "a man of great piety," and whose praise is in all the orthodox churches of Christ, confront him.

The following extracts from the writings of that truly great and good, and orthodox man, may convince the reader that unsupported assertions, although made by Dr. Emmons, are not entitled to implicit credence; and that the Bible, independent of a human creed, *is* a proper test of men's religious opinions.

"By the occasion of hereticks, quarrels and errors," says Baxter, "the serpent steps in, and will needs be a spirit of zeal in the church; and he will so overdo against hereticks, that he persuades them they must enlarge their creed, and add this clause against one, and that against another, and all was but for the perfecting and preserving of the christian faith. And so he brings it to be a matter of so much wit to be a christian (as Erasmus complains) that ordinary heads were not able to reach it. He had got them with a religious cruelty to their own and others' souls, to lay all their salvation, and the peace of the church, upon some unsearchable mysteries about the Trinity, &c."—"Was not this reverend zeal? And was not the devil seemingly now a christian of the most judicious and forward sort? But what got he at this one game?

1. He necessitated implicit faith even in fundamentals, when he had got points beyond a vulgar reach among fundamentals. 2. He necessitated some living judge for the determining of fundamentals (the soul of Popish darkness,) that is, what it is in sense that the people must take for fundamentals. 3. He got a standing verdict against the perfection and sufficiency of scripture, (and consequently against Christ, his Spirit, his apostles,

sciences, may be urged. Dr. Emmons does indeed urge it. But whom does he intend by orthodox christians?

and the christian faith,) that it will not afford us so much as a creed or system of fundamentals, or points absolutely necessary to salvation and brotherly communion, in fit or tolerable phrases; but we must mend the language at least. 4. He opened a gap for human additions, at which he might afterwards bring in more at his pleasure. 5. He framed an engine for an infallible division, and to tare in pieces the church, casting out all as hereticks, that could not subscribe to his additions, and necessitating separation by all dissenters, to the world's end, till the devil's engine be overthrown. 6. And hereby he lays a ground upon the divisions of christians, to bring men into doubt of all religion, as not knowing which is the right. 7. He lays the ground of certain heart-burnings and mutual hatred, contentions, revilings and enmity. Is not here enough got at one cast? Doth there need any more to the establishing of the Romish and hellish darkness? Did not this one act found the seat of Rome! Did not the devil get more in his cloak in one day, than he could get by his sword in three hundred years?—Yea, and where modesty restrains men from putting all such inventions and explications in their creed, the devil persuaded men, that they bring the judgments of godly and reverend divines (no doubt to be reverenced, valued and heard) it is almost as much as if it were in the creed; and therefore whoever dissenteth, must be noted with a black coal, and you must disgrace him, and avoid communion with him, as an heretick. Had it not been for this one plot, the christian faith had been kept pure; religion had been one, and the hearts of christians had been more one than they are. Had not the devil turned orthodox, he had not made so many true christians hereticks, as Epiphanius and Austin have enrolled in the black list. Had not the enemy of truth and peace got into the chair, and made so pathetic an oration as to inflame the minds of the lovers of truth to be over zealous for it, and to do too much, we might have had truth and peace to this day. Yea, still, if he see any man of experience and moderation stand up to reduce men to the ancient simplicity, he presently seems the most zealous for Christ, and tells the unexperienced leaders of the flocks, that it is in favour of some heresy that such a man speaks; he is plotting a carnal syncretism, and attempting the reconcilement of Christ and Belial; he is tainted with popery, or Socinianism, or Arminianism, or Calvinism, or whatsover may make him odious with those he speaks to. O what the devil hath got by overdoing!"

Although the phraseology of this extract from the venerable Baxter, must be exceptionable to the reader, yet as an apology for that great and excellent man, it is to be observed, that he wrote nearly a century and a half past, when harshness of expression was in so general use, that the most fastidious taste was hardly offended by it. Drs. Doddridge and Watts, would not

Those very christians, to whose creeds he does not, nor would he, I presume, on any consideration, give his assent, without so qualifying and explaining them, as to make of them quite different things. Would he give an unqualified assent, either to the *Nicene*, or the *Athanasian*, or the *Calvinistic* creed? It is confidently presumed that he would not. Nor, if tested by either of them, unless in a *lax manner*, could he now maintain his standing as a christian minister, or be allowed a seat at the Lord's table. The Calvinistic creed, which seems to have the highest claim to the term *orthodox*, he does not scruple to reject, as to some of its most distinguished and peculiar articles, as grossly erroneous and absurd, while he zealously advocates, as orthodox, some of the prominent articles of *Arminian heresy*. These are incontestible facts. Nor will the Dr. himself, I presume, either deny or attempt to elude the charge. Why then has he introduced "orthodox christians," as above stated, who would in general have rejected his creed, had they been acquainted with it, as *grossly heretical, and even as blasphemous!* Besides, does not the Dr. well know, that even at the present time, professedly orthodox christians, both in Europe and America, and christians too, eminently distinguished for their piety and information, reject with abhorrence some of

have expressed themselves on the subject in the manner Baxter has done; but I doubt not that they both fully approved the sentiments which he has expressed. Dr. Doddridge, it is well known, was decidedly opposed to subscription to a human creed, as a test of "men's religious opinions," and to the ejection of members from christian churches, on account of their being Arians, and in other respects reputed hereticks. And Dr. Watts expressly says, "I cannot find where our blessed Lord has given them (his ministers) any power, or pretence of power to impose on conscience any of their own inventions, of new doctrines, or duties; or so much as their own peculiar explications of the words of Christ, by their own authority." "A christian church," he observes, "allows all its members the most perfect liberty of men and christians. It pretends to no power over conscience. It gives its ministers power and authority to command nothing but what is found in the Bible."

Not only were these burning and shining lights in the christian church decidedly opposed to Dr. Emmons on the subject of human creeds, but thousands of their cotemporaries—of their predecessors, and of their successors, eminent for their orthodoxy and piety. And sooner, I am persuaded, would they have gone as martyrs to the stake, than subscribe the Dr's. orthodox creed, or to the sentiments which he has expressed in relation to the Bible and human creeds in his *papal* sermon, "preached at the installation of the Rev. Holland Weeks."

the leading articles of his *orthodox* creed ?—Why then, I again ask, has Dr. E. introduced to your notice, those orthodox christians, in the manner he has done ? Has it been with the view to identify *his* religious creed with *theirs ?* Or to make you believe, that the orthodox creed has been the same " ever since the days of primitive christianity ?" Or to insinuate that none but orthodox christians, in his sense of the terms, " have made use of formularies, creeds and confessions of faith *?*" or that such orthodox christians have approved of and assented to each other's devices of this kind ?—I have too good an opinion of the Dr's. knowledge and integrity, to admit that either of these things was his object. What then *could have been his object* ? I am weary of conjectures ; nor shall I venture to give a peremptory decision on the subject.

But whatever may have been the Dr's. object, or however he and other spiritual guides can satisfy their consciences in imposing upon you a creed of their own fabrication, as the only proper test of orthodoxy and communion, it certainly becomes *you* very seriously to examine into *your own conduct*, in assenting to a creed of this description, and in requiring others to assent to it, as indispensable to their admission to a great and precious christian privilege. Do you not by this your conduct, implicitly acknowledge that a form of human words is a better religious test than the words of the living God ? and that *his* words are no proper test of men's religious sentiments ! that while God's words are *fallible*, those of men are *infallible* !—and that you are " not *ashamed* to profess them," as such " before the world, nor *afraid* to bind yourselves to believe them as long as you shall live, and as long as you shall exist !" Do you not also implicitly acknowledge that Dr.E. and other pastors of churches who concur with him in sentiment, " exalt themselves above all that is called God," and that they have an *unquestionable right to do this* ! These questions, christian brethren, strongly as they are stated, I consider as pertinent, as they are serious and important. And most earnestly do I beseech you to consider them with the most awakened, impartial and interested attention. And as you would not have the " key of knowledge taken from you," and be yourselves reduced to a state of degrading religious vassallage, rouse from your apathy, and " play the man."

Should you say that in assenting to a human creed as " an indispensable, and only proper test of orthodoxy," the thought never entered your minds that you implicitly acknowledged all these shocking things, I am willing to admit the fact. I cannot believe that with *design*, you do

acknowledge them. But whether designed or not, you *really do*, as I conceive, *make the acknowledgment, by just and fair implication.* Nor do I see how you can elude the charge. The subject has certainly a strong and *imperious* claim to your very solemn consideration. And most sincerely do I hope that this claim will *not be disregarded.*

Should you say that you do not assent to human creeds as infallibly true—or as wholly true as they are understood by your *ministers*, or by *others*, or even by *yourselves;* but that you assent to them as *partly true*, and *partly false*, of what "*immense benefit*," I would then ask, can be the assent you give to them? Besides, in what light must your conduct appear in the view of God, and of all honest and ingenuous men? Must it not be deemed as an act of unjustifiable *trifling* with a most sacred and solemn subject? Can you consistently with the open, frank, and noble character of *christianity*, be guilty of such *duplicity* and *disguise?*

Furthermore, is it not a fact that some of you, to say the least, reject, both with your *understandings*, and your *hearts*, that article of the creed imposed upon you, which requires your assent to the doctrine of a *triune God*, or a God existing in three equal persons? This, I *well know*, to be the fact. With pungent grief, mingled with astonishment, I contemplate the subject. Can you be insensible, that you *professedly* assent to this article, and in the most *solemn manner*, as often as you hear it read in public by your ministers? What, my brethren, shall I say?—"Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not." To me your conduct appears very foreign from that, in which there is no guile. I cannot but esteem it as highly improper, and pardon me, if I add, *inexcusably criminal.* Think not that I am become your enemy, because I tell you, what appears to me, a *solemn truth.* Be not offended if I express my apprehension that you are very unreasonably under the influence of that "fear of man which bringeth a snare." Are you not already entangled by it, to the *wounding of conscience?* Can you hesitate whether it be *wrong* to obey *man* rather than *God!* Rise, then, in all the majesty of the christian character, and of christian liberty. Break your bands asunder, and indignantly cast from you the cords with which you are bound. Like christian heroes solemnly *protest*, as *some* of your brethren have nobly dared to do, against the *ecclesiastical usurpation*, to which you have too long bowed your necks; and, if like them, you should be *driven* from the communion of your orthodox brethren, as unworthy the

christian name, "count it all joy, that ye fall into this temptation; knowing this that the trial of your faith worketh patience, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

Should Mr. T. consider any parts of his publication which I have reviewed, as unfairly or uncandidly treated, he will have the goodness, I hope, to exculpate me of blame, as with truth, I assure him that I have, in *no instance*, with design, done him the smallest injustice. But as several passages in his pamphlet appeared to me very obscure and ambiguous, I am not sure that I have not given them a wrong construction, and treated them in an improper manner.

By far the greater part of his statements, I consider not only as incorrect, but in a high degree as erroneous; nor can I doubt that any of my readers, who will be at the pains carefully to canvass them, and the grounds on which they were made, will perfectly concur with me in opinion.

Has he proved, or even attempted to prove the incorrectness of the construction I have given to scripture passages in support of my sentiments? Has he refuted, or fairly met and examined a single argument I have employed for that purpose? Or has he so assailed the general contents of my letter, as to detect a single error, or to invalidate their truth: If he thinks so, we are certainly very far from coinciding in opinion. But should it be admitted that he has detected errors, and even subverted my theory, yet he has utterly failed, I am persuaded, in his attempt to illustrate and establish his own. He has indeed, utterly failed in his attempt to exhibit it in such a manner as *even to be understood.* His readers, I must believe, can form no distinct idea of the character of the one God, of his Son, or of his Spirit, from any thing which he has communicated respecting them. Nor do I think that any two of them have the same view of his theory of the Trinity, farther than this, that they have *no distinct view* of the subject. Let them but ask themselves, and each other, "what are we to believe or think respecting the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, according to Mr. T's. representations?" and they will soon be satisfied *what the answer must be.*

As it is Mr. T's. "fixed determination not to consume his time in controversy with me, and to make no reply, should I see fit publicly to notice his pamphlet," I shall now with anxious concern for his reputation, his welfare and usefulness, take my leave of him with a few monitory hints, and I trust, in the spirit of love and real friendship.

Very seriously and solemnly do I call upon him to inquire of his own conscience in the presence of the heart-searching God, at whose tribunal he must render an impartial account of his conduct, whether he is "satisfied from himself," with the pamphlet which he has lately published as to its correctness, its candour, or its truth?—Whether it be consistent with an ingenuous and christian character, to make it a leading object of his letter to asperse and calumniate his brother, who has always treated him with marks of fraternal kindness and sincere friendship, without guile and prevarication; and of whose truth, integrity and unimpeachable character, in a moral view, he can have had no just cause to doubt?—Whether, after having endeavoured to destroy his character, and without any just reason or provocation for it, an impartial public will be satisfied with his *silence*, and especially after the "incorrect statements and exceptionable passages," in his letter are detected and exposed!—Whether he wrote his pamphlet with such a temper of mind as he would be willing to possess on the bed of death, and at the day of judgment?

In the hope, and with the earnest desire that Mr. T. will give these monitory questions that serious and interested consideration which their nature and importance demand—that they may be happily instrumental of reinstating him in that good opinion which I once entertained of him—of removing all misunderstanding between us, and of preparing the way for that pleasant and improving intercourse which we formerly maintained—Hoping for, and earnestly desirous of these happy results, and that the unpleasant controversy between us may be mutually profitable to ourselves—instrumental to the promotion of religious inquiry and truth, and to the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, I conclude with assurances of my esteem and affection for all, of whatever sect or denomination, who apparently love and possess the mild and beneficent spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX No. I. for p. 4.

HINGHAM, NOV. 8, 1815.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

HAVING taken the subject of your request into consideration, I am prepared to give the following reply:

I have not been able to find any statement in your late publication, entitled, "Things as they are," contrary to declarations or promises, which to my knowledge have been made on your part.

I distinctly recollect, that after your reply to Mr. Thomas' letter was read at our last association, and after his explanation of some of his expressions, you observed, "That you knew not that you should publish what you had written; and if you should, you thought you should omit those passages in relation to which satisfactory explanations had been given;" or words to this effect.

However deeply I lament the controversy, I am constrained to add, that according to the best of my knowledge, I find no statement respecting facts, in the aforementioned publication, which it not true.

Respectfully yours,

JOSEPH RICHARDSON.

REV. JACOB NORTON.

APPENDIX No. II. for p. 16.

HINGHAM, APRIL 18, 1815.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

YOUR request that I would state what I know respecting the sentiments of the late Rev. Dr. J. Strong, concerning the doctrine of the Trinity, I have taken into serious consideration. I cannot but feel regret that a dispute should arise concerning that subject. If, however, this statement be of any importance to aid the establishment of the truth, I am willing to give it.

I well recollect, that when I first heard that gentleman converse respecting the doctrine advanced in the book entitled, "Bible News," he advocated the representation it gave of the character of Christ, with zeal, and in a manner which led me to conclude that he embraced it.

However he might, during one or two years last preceding his death, not have advocated that doctrine, yet he did not appear to me to embrace the doctrine of the Trinity, as laid down in the catechism of the Westminster Assembly of divines. I did not consider him as being a Trinitarian according to the common use of the term.

Yours, with great respect,

JOSEPH RICHARDSON.

REV. MR. NORTON.

WEYMOUTH, MARCH 9, 1815.

I the subscriber, hereby testify and say, that I have the most satisfactory evidence from what I have heard the late Dr. Strong of Randolph, say, respecting the character of Jesus Christ, that he was not a Trinitarian, as the doctrine of the Trinity is stated in the Assembly's Shorter Catechism, and in the late Dr. Hopkins' System of Divinity.

ELIPHAZ THAYER.

I the subscriber, certify all whom it may concern, that I heard the late Rev. Dr. Strong of Randolph, say within about a year of his death, that he was not a Trinitarian,—that he knew not but the sentiments of the Rev. Mr. Norton of Weymouth, respecting the doctrine of the Trinity were correct, and that had it not been that he published, (or was supposed to publish) a pamphlet on sin, he should be able to get along with him very well.

EBENEZER HUNT, jun.

In addition to the above testimonies in support of the truth of what I have said with respect to Dr. Strong's sentiments, hundreds might be produced, I doubt not, if his sentiments were understood, and his hearers were disposed to say what they know or believe concerning them.

The testimonies exhibited, I have obtained without stepping aside for them, either to the right hand or the left; nor have I sought for any other.

SERIOUS AND SOLEMN ADDRESS

To christian churches, and to all christians whom it may particularly concern, on the subject of the Presbyterian mode of church government and discipline.

ALTHOUGH I do not pretend to a thorough acquaintance with Presbyterianism, yet with the general traits of its character I am not ignorant. *These*, therefore, I beg leave to exhibit to your view, for your awakened and interested attention.

The Presbyterian church government is the joint work of clergyman, and a certain number of lay-men, who decide every question which comes before them by a plurality of votes. These lay-men are called *elders*, or *ruling elders*. Every Presbyterian parish or society have several of these lay-elders chosen from among the members of the church. These elders, with the minister of the church, who *by office* is their moderator, form an ecclesiastical judicatory, called the *session*, or *court of session*. This court hold several meetings annually, who hear and decide questions of an ecclesiastical nature. In these transactions, the brotherhood, or church as a body, have no part or voice. From the decisions of this court, appeals may be made to a higher court.

This court or judicatory, is called the *Presbytery*, which consists of all the pastors of a certain number of churches, and one or more elders from each church. These elders are commissioned to represent, in conjunction with the ministers, the sessions of the respective churches. The Presbytery attend to, and act upon such matters as concern the particular churches within their limits or jurisdiction. These matters relate to the examination, admission, ordination and censuring of ministers; the licensing of probationers or candidates to preach; the rebuking of those whom they consider as worthy of rebuke; the directing of the sentence of excommunication; the deciding upon references and appeals from the sessions or lower courts; the resolving of cases of conscience, explaining of difficulties in doctrine or discipline; and the censuring of any heresy or erroneous doctrine, which has either been publickly, or in a more private way, maintained within the bounds of their jurisdiction.

From the judgment of the Presbytery, appeals may be made to a still higher court of judicatory, called the *synod*. This court meet once or twice annually, and exercise over the Presbyteries within their jurisdiction, similar authority to that, which is vested in each Presbytery over the several sessions within their bounds.

The highest authority in the Presbyterian church of Scotland, (and so far as I know in Presbyterian churches in the American States) is the *general assembly*, which consists of a certain number of ministers and elders delegated from each Presbytery. Appeals are brought from the lower ecclesiastical courts to this general assembly; and in questions of a religious nature, no appeal lies from their determinations.

Here, my brethren, you have, I believe, a just, if not a finished portraiture of Presbyterianism. If its features are not repulsive, or if they harmonize with those drawn by the pencil of inspiration, receive and embrace it; otherwise reject it.

But that the ecclesiastical government which has now been exhibited, is widely different from that which we find delineated in the gospel, I am fully persuaded. Nor do I see, how you can differ from me in opinion, if, abandoning human authority and device, you take the New Testament scriptures as your only rule of judging. In these scriptures not a single lineament of the Presbyterian system of government and discipline, it is confidently believed, is to be found. Where, in the New Testament code, do you find a model of ecclesiastical government, to which this bears a resemblance? Where do you find a single example or precept, which favours the establishment of three or four distinct judicatories in the christian church, to the exclusion of the brotherhood or private members from all share in ecclesiastical discipline and concerns? Or where do you find any authority for the establishment of *lay elders* in the church! Vain, I am persuaded, will be your appeal to the New Testament, to support either the form, or the spirit of Presbyterian government.

Have we, christian brethren, no divine model of church order and government? This, I would presume, you will not say. Shall we then conform to *this model*, or shall we enact and submit to laws of *expediency and discretion*? If to the latter, do you not see that private members of the church will be liable to become the slaves and dupes of their spiritual rulers, and to bow submissively to their decrees, as the decrees of Heaven? Do you not perceive that the door would be flung widely open to ambitious men to impose on the simplicity of the multitude, and to promote schemes for their own aggrandisement, under the specious cover of ardent zeal for *orthodoxy*, and *wholesome* religious discipline! Such men as *Diotrephes*, would always assume the pre-eminence, and give you proofs, which you would not be likely to forget, of their aptitude to govern, and of the *infallibility* of their government. Many such men *have* existed in the christian church. Nor ought you to be unmindful that human nature is essentially the same *now*, as in *times past*.

But if we have a *divine model* of church order and government, why should we not adopt and adhere to it? In doing this, should we not act agreeably to our profession as christians, and practically say that we esteem the laws of Christ as more excellent and authoritative, than the laws of fallible, ambitious, and aspiring men? What then is the model of ecclesiastical order and government, as exhibited in the New Testament scriptures? Agree-

ably to this model, must it not be admitted that a congregation of professing christians meeting in one place for religious worship, is a complete church, having competent power to do every thing relative to religious government within itself, and amenable to no other church or ecclesiastical tribunal on earth? What evidence have we that the primitive and apostolic churches were either national, provincial, Presbyterian, or synodical, or consociated for the purpose of religious government and discipline? Although there were many believers and professing christians in Judea, in Galilee, in Samaria, in Macedonia, in Galatia, &c. yet we have no intimation that a collective church of either of the above descriptions existed. The particular societies of christians in those districts are represented as so many distinct and independent churches. In the apostolic age, bishops, pastors, or elders, were so far from presiding over, or managing the affairs of more churches than one, that a plurality of these officers, in some instances, if not in all, presided over the same church. The church of Jerusalem, of Antioch, of Corinth, of Cenchrea, a port of Corinth, and other churches, met together in one place, and at the same time. Nor does it appear that he who was a member of one of these churches, was a member of any other, or under the jurisdiction of any other.

Who that reads with due attention the monitory addresses made to the seven churches of Asia, but must be convinced that these churches were independent of each other, with respect to religious government and discipline? Do we in these addresses find the censurable faults of one of the churches charged on the others, or either of the others? But had they been established on a Presbyterian platform, or had they been consociated for disciplinary purposes, all the churches, we may reasonably believe, would have been admonished and censured for the faulty and delinquent conduct of each.

Independency or congregationalism is taught not only in the monitory addresses to these Asiatic churches, but in what is said every where in the New Testament concerning *all the churches.*

This is particularly, and as it appears to me, very clearly taught by the rule which our Saviour established for settling an offence occasioned by a brother or member of a church. "Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault, between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother, but if he will not hear *thee*, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established; and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican." Here the *last* appeal is to the church; Christ does not direct the offended party to take the offender to a church session, a presbytery, or to a synod; but to the *church*, to *all the brotherhood* of which it is composed. If Christ had intended by *church* any Presbyterian *ecclesiastical court*, to which of them does he refer? If to the session, then all higher appeals are cut off; for if the offending brother will not hear the church, he is

to be accounted as an heathen man and a publican. But if Christ referred to a general synod or assembly, then all inferior courts are cut off. Must not his direction then, or the rule which he established, be totally incompatible with Presbyterian principles and practice ?

The independency of individual churches is, it should seem, fully supported by the injunctions of the apostles for their direction respecting the discipline of Christ's house. According to these injunctions, the whole church are to receive members. "Him that is weak in the faith, *receive ye*." Can members be received into christian fellowship according to this direction on the Presbyterian plan ? The epistle to the Corinthians is addressed to the church of God at Corinth, which consisted not of ministers and lay-elders, but of "them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints." But we find that the power of discipline and excommunication, was vested in the whole church. Agreeably, the apostle thus addresses them, "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, when *ye* are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ ; to deliver such an one (an incestuous member) unto Satan, &c." "Do not *ye* judge them that are within ? therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." Of the excommunicated person the same apostle observes, "sufficient to such a man is the punishment which was inflicted of many," *the whole church*. The restoration also of an excommunicated member, upon his repentance and reformation, is also the duty of the whole church. "Ye ought," says the apostle, addressing the members collectively, "rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such an one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore, I beseech you, that ye would confirm your love towards him."

In these, and other instances, "the instructions and commands given, necessarily suppose the constitution of the church to which they were directed, to have been independent ; for to no other could thay have been applied ; in no other could they have been executed."

In comparison with this simple constitution, which, in this respect, is like all other divine institutions, how complicate and perplexing is the machinery of Presbyterian government ! To settle difficulties which arise in churches, and to transact other ecclesiastical affairs, is it necessary to institute a variety of judicatories, and that representatives from different churches far remote from each other, in every part of the state, and perhaps of all the states in the union, should hold meetings, and at a great expense ? Is there any thing in this, which bears a resemblance to the simplicity of the institution of churches which you find in the gospel, or any of the institutions of the gospel ? And what, my brethren, can you find in the transactions of a general synod or assembly, which could not have been done by an individual church, with *legitimate* authority—without parade, pomp and expense, to quite as good, and probably to much better purpose ?

In this connexion permit me to ask, did not the apostles of our Lord, in the constitution of churches, act by his authority? Can the form of church government, then, which they instituted, be treated with neglect—can it be rejected, or can it be infringed, without offence to the great Head of the church? As well may we thus treat any other apostolic institution, as that of church government. Nor can we add any thing to the divine model, nor take any thing from it, which will not mar the beauty, and enfeeble the strength of the simple and well proportioned edifice. "We have no such" *legitimate* "custom, neither the" *pure* "churches of God."

Will the advocates for a Presbyterian form of church government refer you to the convocation or meeting mentioned in the 15th chapter of the Acts, as the impregnable bulwark of Presbytery? But I pray you, christian brethren, carefully to read and seriously to ponder the whole history of that event, and then say, whether you discover in it any trace of the Presbyterian form of church government. Do you here find any evidence of a subordination of ecclesiastical courts? Do you find any intimation that the subject in question had been canvassed and tried by a church session? that it was then carried to a Presbytery, and that from the Presbytery an appeal had been made to the supposed synod or general assembly convened at Jerusalem? As it is not so much as intimated that either of the two first mentioned courts had attended to the subject in debate, or that such courts existed, we have no evidence that the meeting at Jerusalem was a Presbyterian synod or general assembly. Besides, if an appeal had been made from a Presbytery, the letter of the church of Jerusalem, instead of having been addressed to the *brethren*, as it really was, would have been addressed to the *Presbytery* of Antioch, had such a Presbytery existed. But as the letter was addressed to the brethren of the church collectively, it may with much confidence be inferred, that there was no Presbytery to be addressed.

"By what authority is the meeting at Jerusalem called a synod? Who were the members that composed it? Were they not the apostles, the elders, and the brethren of the church at Jerusalem *only*? Was there a single representative, either minister or elder, from any other church upon earth?" We have not the least evidence that this was the case; but the most satisfactory evidence that no members of foreign churches were to be found in that meeting or assembly. We have no evidence then that the meeting or assembly composed a Presbyterian synod.

But should you be told, christian brethren, that at the present day, and under existing circumstances, the Presbyterian mode of government is expedient and useful, and ought therefore to be adopted—I pray you very seriously to inquire whether *you* can think it either expedient or useful to yourselves, who are Christ's freemen, to be deprived of your christian liberty, and be entangled in the yoke of bondage?—whether it is expedient or useful to adopt a form of church government, which affords strong incitements to ambition, and powerful temptations to the exercise

of severe ecclesiastical tyranny and oppression? which apparently implies a distrust of the wisdom of Christ and his apostles; and a leaning to your own understanding? In short, can you think it expedient or useful to abandon the scriptural form of church government, and adopt one of human device, which is calculated to generate and foster a violent spirit of party, intemperate zeal, a most unreasonable attachment to human forms and creeds; and which will be likely to substitute the *form* for the *power* of godliness, and to preserve the *name* of orthodoxy at the expense of christian *love*, and its mild and *beneficent effects!* If to do this be not expedient and useful, examine I beseech you, the history of synods, &c. whether papal or protestant, and act with caution;—guard against every departure from the gospel standard, and remain firm and steadfast in that liberty whereby Christ has made you free.

What possible advantage can you hope to derive to yourselves from adopting a Presbyterian mode of government and discipline? Or what advantage will be gained to the cause of Christ's kingdom, by a departure from *his* laws and authority? "Force may make hypocrites; but will never make a christian. A law of Synod may prevent a minister from preaching supposed heretical doctrines; but it will be far from enabling him to preach the truth as it is in Jesus. A law of synod may give splendour to a supposed orthodox faith; but this faith may occasion the reign of midnight darkness—of darkness which may be *felt*. It is indeed a melancholy fact that the orthodoxy, which stands in human creeds, formularies, and confessions, has but too often operated very greatly towards the extinguishment of the benevolent and charitable spirit, of pure and undefiled christianity; and to the blighting, and even destruction of its fair, and pleasant, and salutary fruits.—Consider these things well; seriously ponder them in your hearts, and suffer yourselves to be suitably influenced by them.

But you will say, perhaps, that it is not your design to adopt a Presbyterian mode of government—that you are opposed to it, and will never submit your necks to the yoke. Nor can I doubt that you would be prepared to say this, were you well acquainted with the nature and results of that government. But if it is not your design to become Presbyterians, do you think it would be expedient or justifiable to choose elders from among your brethren, who are now on the footing of equality with yourselves? Is it not possible that this step, should it once be taken, will lead you whither you know not—into a labyrinth, from which, however desirous of it, you may never be able to retrace your unadvised and precipitate course? The part of wisdom requires that you act deliberately and with jealous caution in this important affair.

But you have been told, perhaps, that in creating elders in the churches of which you are members, you will act agreeably to the constitution of *apostolical churches*. But is it certain that this will *really* be the case? So far from it, that you will act, I

am persuaded, in direct repugnance to the constitution of those churches.

That there were elders in those churches, is not to be denied. But did they sustain the office of *lay-elders* in Presbyterian churches, or the office of elders like those whom you may have it in contemplation to create? This is not to be admitted. Their office was that of *pastors*, *bishops*, or *shepherds*. The words *elder* and *bishop*, are in the original, "perfectly interchangeable, and constantly applied to the same officers in the church." And these officers are called upon, without exception, to "feed the flock, and to take the oversight of it, &c." and they are all required to be "fit to teach." Hence it follows that if there were lay-elders in the primitive churches, there must also have been in them *lay*-bishops or pastors; that is, *men, who sustained the pastoral office, and yet were not pastors!*

Lay-elders are no where found in scripture. The apostles indeed ordained elders in every church, and these elders are once denominated Presbytery; but with relation only to the churches over which they were ordained as bishops or pastors. By *Presbytery*, then, is evidently intended the eldership or pastors of a *particular church or congregation*. "Nor is there the least foundation in scripture to suppose, that this Presbytery of a particular church, were made up of what are called lay-elders and a pastor."

I know of but one passage in the New Testament from which any person would be likely to infer the existence of lay-eldership in the apostolic churches. The passage to which I allude, is 1 Tim. v. 17. "Let the elders that rule well be accounted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in word and doctrine." Here two sorts of elders seem to be designated. But that they were different in rank or office, will not be admitted. The sense of the text I am persuaded is this, "Let the *pastors* or *bishops*, whose peculiar gift is especially adapted to the government of the church, be accounted worthy of all due honour or maintenance; but let those pastors or bishops who excel in preaching talents, and are much engaged in the exercise of those talents, have still greater honour or maintenance."—Agreeably, the Apostle adds, "For the scripture saith, thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn;" that is, "the labourer is worthy of his hire."

Besides, as the elders in the primitive churches were ordained by the apostles, so they were vested with, and exercised the power of ordination. But are the elders whom you may have it in contemplation to create, to be ordained, and to be vested with the power of ordination! If not, you will make no pretension, I trust, in creating lay-elders, to an adherence to the model of the primitive christian churches.

If such are not the elders you are about to create, what *are* they, and to what *end* are they to be created? Are they, in connexion with their pastors to be invested with power to maintain the government and discipline of the churches, and to manage their affairs, to the exclusion of the rest of the brethren? But can

you delegate to them this authority, without relinquishing a great and precious privilege—without treating with neglect and contempt an important and indispensable duty? Is it not a great and precious privilege to be a member—an *active* member of Christ's kingdom with respect to its disciplinary laws and concerns? But can you relinquish this privilege without abandoning your duty? In doing this, you will place yourselves in a situation in which it will not be in your power to follow the directions of the apostles, nor practically to regard the authority of Christ, with respect to the most important affairs of his house or kingdom. Although you may be *willing* to give up all right or concern in church affairs, I see not how you can do it *consistently* with the discharge of those important duties which are indispensably incumbent on you as the visible members of Christ's church. Can you discharge the duty of prayer, of reading the scriptures, of attending on public worship, and of communion at the Lord's table by *proxy*, or in the person of your neighbour? How then can you discharge your obligation with respect to the concerns of the church, of which you are members, should you resign your power to do this, into the hands of others?

Before you thus act, solemnly pause—seriously weigh the subject—diligently search the New Testament scriptures—endeavour to ascertain what is the will of Christ—And let me entreat you not to deviate from it, either to the right hand or left, under the plea of expediency, or of promoting the cause of orthodoxy, or religion, or the glory of God! By such deviation will you not be likely to defeat all these great and important purposes? How long shall human wisdom be opposed to the wisdom of God? Let us, abandoning all these idle and delusive dreams, strictly adhere to the word of God. If we but do this, we need be under no apprehension that he will not take care of, and provide for the success of his own cause, and the prosperity of his church and people. Let us remember that it is not by human devices that we can subserve the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom, or submit to his authority. "It is only in proportion as christian churches renounce human wisdom, and follow the footsteps of the first churches, that they are likely to grow and increase in a desirable manner. By refusing to obey the laws which the wisdom of God has provided for the prosperity of the kingdom, they mar their own comfort and edification, cast a stumbling block before the world, and subject themselves to divine reprehension."

But you have, perhaps, been told that in choosing elders for the management of church affairs, you will but act agreeably to the Cambridge Platform, or "the platform of church discipline," formed and adopted "by the elders and messengers of the churches of Massachusetts Province, in the year 1648—that this platform admits of eldership in churches, and is friendly to the Presbyterian form of government; and that we may safely tread in the steps of our pious and venerable ancestors." All this has been urged, it may be, as an argument in favour of the measure you may have it in contemplation to adopt.—Yet before you

suffer it to influence your conduct, you ought to consider, that however pious and venerable were the conduct and character of our ancestors, they have not so strong a claim to our respect and imitation, as apostolic precept and example. We are to call no uninspired man or body of men, father, in a religious view; nor to imitate their conduct, further than they walked by gospel rule.

Were our ancestors Presbyterians, or advocates for that kind of eldership in churches, which exclude the brotherhood from taking an active part in church discipline, yet we are, I am persuaded, no more to copy from them in this respect, than from their unjustifiable religious intolerance and persecutions.

But the fact is, they were *not* Presbyterians; nor were they advocates for the eldership in question. Their mode of church government as exhibited in the platform, is strictly congregational. "The officers," in the primitive christian churches according to the platform, "were either extraordinary, or ordinary; ordinary as *elders* and *deacons*. The *apostles*, *prophets*, and *evangelists*, as they were called, extraordinarily by Christ, so their office ended with themselves. Whence it is that Paul, directing Timothy how to carry along church administrations, giveth no direction about the choice or course of *apostles*, *prophets*, or *evangelists*; but only of *elders* (pastors) and *deacons*; and when Paul was to take his last leave of the church of Ephesus, he committed the care of feeding the church to no other, but unto the elders of the church. The like charge doth Peter commit to the elders."—"Of elders, who are also in scripture called *bishops*, some attend chiefly to the ministry of the word, as the pastors and teachers; others attend especially unto rule, who are therefore called ruling elders." The power of office in elders, or ruling elders, extends, agreeably to the platform to "the admission of members, *approved by the church*: to the ordination of officers chosen by the church; to the feeding of the flock of God, and to the imposition of hands in the ordination of other elders."

"It is natural unto a church body, to be furnished with sufficient power for its own preservation and subsistence."

"The government of the church is a mixed government. In respect of *Christ*, the head and king of the church, and the sovereign power residing in him, and exercised by him, it is a *monarchy*. In respect of the body or *brotherhood* of the church, and power from Christ granted unto them, it resembles a *democracy*; and in respect of the *Presbytery* (pastors) and power committed unto them, it is *an aristocracy*." "The power granted by Christ unto the body of the church and *brotherhood*, is a prerogative or privilege, which the church doth exercise. 1. In choosing their own officers whether elders (pastors) or deacons. 2. In admission of their own members; and therefore there is great reason they should have power to remove any from their fellowship again, &c." "In case an elder (pastor) offend incorrigibly, the matter so requiring, as the church had power to call him to office, so they have power, according to order, to remove him from office; and being now but a member, in case of contumacy to his sin, the church that had power to receive him into

their fellowship, hath also the same power to cast him out, that they have concerning any other member." "It belongs unto the elders (pastors) to examine any officers or members before they be received of the church; to receive the accusations brought to the church, and to prepare them for the church's hearing. In handling of offences, and other matters before the church, they have power to declare, and publish the council and will of God, touching the same, and to pronounce sentence with *consent of the church.*"

"The scripture not only calls elders *labourers*, and *workmen*, but also speaking of them doth say, that *the labourer is worthy of his hire*; and requires that he which is taught in the word, should communicate to him in all good things; and mentions it as an ordinance of the Lord, that they which preach the gospel, should live of the gospel."

Christian churches, according to the platform, "have not dominion one over another." "They have no more authority one over another, than one apostle had over another." Nor have synods any power "to exercise church censures in way of discipline, nor any other act of church authority, or jurisdiction, which that presidential synod, Acts 15, did forbear." And in synods "the presence of any brethren in the churches is not to be excluded."

When "the elders and other messengers of the churches were assembled in Boston, in the year 1662," to consider certain "questions propounded to them by order of the honourable General Court, the following is among their answers:—"Every church or particular congregation of visible saints, in gospel order, being furnished with a Presbytery, (pastors) at least with a teaching elder, hath received from the Lord Jesus full power and authority ecclesiastical within itself, regularly to administer all the ordinances of Christ, and is not under any other ecclesiastical jurisdiction whatever." "Hence it follows that consociation of churches is not to hinder the exercise of this power, &c."

The above quotations from the Cambridge platform must convince you, christian brethren, that our pious and venerable ancestors were very far from being Presbyterians. They were conscientiously and very decidedly opposed to the Presbyterian form of government, and as strongly attached to congregationalism, or that independency of churches for which I plead. On their principles lay-eldership, which would interfere with the right and power of the brotherhood to act in the disciplinary affairs of Christ's kingdom, was inadmissible.

"The instituting of officers in the church," (elders or pastors, and deacons) they observe "is the work of God himself, of the Lord Jesus Christ, of the Holy Ghost; and therefore such officers as he hath not appointed, are altogether unlawful either to be placed in the church, or to be retained therein, and are to be looked at as human creatures, mere inventions, and appointments of men, to the great dishonour of Christ Jesus, the Lord of his house, the king of his church, &c."

I have been thus particular in exhibiting to your view the sentiments and practice of our forefathers in relation to church government and discipline, as stated in the Cambridge platform, that improper and misleading impressions on your minds respecting the subject might be effaced, if such impressions, from any source, have been made. And that you may not act in the dark, nor under any misguiding influence, open your eyes, I beseech you, to the steady, clear, and the true light which the gospel affords with respect to the constitution and disciplinary laws of Christ's kingdom. Walk by this light, and your steps will be directed unto the path of truth and safety. But remember that if ye "walk in the light of your own fire, and in the sparks of your own kindling," you must expect that the result will be as the "crackling of thorns under a pot"—a violent and tumultuary blaze, followed by deep obscurity.

If you are desirous to purge out the old leaven from among yourselves, so as to become a new lump, you will practically regard the admonition of our pious ancestors "assembled at Boston, 1662," on "the necessity of reformation."

You will be careful to mortify "the pride—the spiritual pride that doth abound."—You will oppose and abandon "human inventions and will worship."—You will suppress "inordinate passions; sinful lusts and hatreds; evil surmisings, uncharitable and unrighteous censures, backbitings, hearing and telling tales," &c. You will frown indignantly on "false reports, and walking with slanders and reproaches, and that sometimes against the most faithful and eminent servants of God." And instead of human creeds and interpretations, you will consider "the infallible rule of interpretation of scripture, to be the scripture itself; and therefore when there is a question about the true and full sense of any scripture, it must be searched and known by other places, that speak more clearly."

Thus it becomes us *all* to unite heart, and head, and hand, in endeavouring to promote a reformation in the church, which will make her "look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, beautiful as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, and terrible as an army with banners." Such a reformation would render our churches unspeakably more excellent in the view of God, and all considerate men—it would render them unspeakably more serviceable to the interest of pure and undefiled religion, than the most correct orthodoxy, as established by human creeds and confessions, and all the devices invented by weak and fallible men.

Various are the ways in which the natural pride of the human heart is discovered; nor is it strange that good men should sometimes be so far under its influence as to lean rather to their own understandings, than to the infallible word of God, and thus entangle themselves with error and hurtful devices.—Let us then carefully guard against this evil. And that we may effectually do it, let the holy scriptures, and not men of like passions with ourselves, be our counsellors.—Let us highly prize, diligently consult them, and resolutely follow their dictates, how much soever it may expose us to calumny and reproach. Nor let us fear

any imputation of heresy which this course may bring upon us. Let us prize the smallest scripture truth with respect to *Jesus Christ* and the *laws of his kingdom*, as unspeakably more precious than all the dogmas of orthodox men and exclusive christians—than all the reputation for sanctity which these can give us—than even "mountains of gold and rocks of diamond." Like the noble Bereans, let us search the scriptures for ourselves. Let us do this prayerfully, and with minds open to conviction, and "judge even of *our own selves* what is right," and regulate our conduct accordingly, "although bonds and afflictions may abide us." Thus let us humbly wait at the feet of Jesus—learn wisdom from his word, and obey his laws.—Then may we reasonably hope, that "light will arise in obscurity, and our darkness be as the noon day."

FINIS.

THINGS AS THEY ARE;

OR,

Trinitarianism Developed.

SECOND PART.

IN REPLY TO A

Letter written by Rev. Daniel Thomas, A. M. of Abington.

TOGETHER WITH

Remarks on Dr. Emmons' Sermon at the Installation of Rev. Holland Weeks.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A SOLEMN AND SERIOUS ADDRESS

To Christian Churches, and to all Christians whom it may particularly concern, on the subject of the Presbyterian mode of Church Government and Discipline.

BY JACOB NORTON, A. M.
Pastor of the First Religious Society in Weymouth.

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